



ASHWELL YEARBOOK 2022

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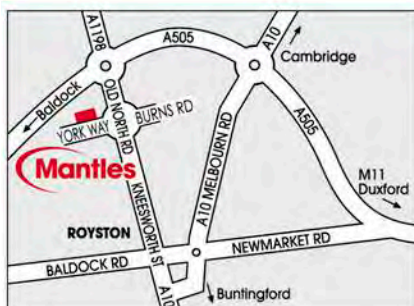
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ASHWELL YEARBOOK 2022

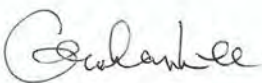
Welcome to the 2022 edition of the Ashwell Yearbook.

At the time of writing this in early December it's difficult to predict what degree of normality the village will be facing in March 2022. Let's all hope that 2022 will follow on from the gradual return to a more normal life experienced during 2021, that the major village events will be allowed to take place and people will feel safe to participate.

Irrespective of that, the Yearbook Working Group have been able to plan and prepare this edition of the Yearbook with the normal high level of creativity and enthusiasm. Every year the Yearbook seems to get even better, providing a superb window into the life of our historically rich, attractive and active village.

The Parish Council would like to thank all the members of the Yearbook Working Group and other contributors for producing this latest edition. Special thanks go to Norton Mahy for leading the Group. He has risen to the challenge of raising the quality bar of the publication yet again.

We would also like to thank the many Ashwell based businesses, and other businesses that provide a service to Ashwell, for advertising in this issue. Without their support for the Yearbook it would simply not be possible to produce such a high quality and comprehensive magazine. So please continue to use their services as much as possible. And after the initial reading, please keep the Yearbook as a handy reference book for these services and a guide to the activity groups available in the village, all of which contribute to the Ashwell community.



Graham Lee, Chairman, Ashwell Parish Council



Annual Parish Meeting

23rd March 2022, 8:00pm at the School (big hall). All welcome. Please remember to bring your copy of the 2022 Ashwell Yearbook.

Contents

Welcome	1
Ashwell Parish Council	2
Community Groups	16
Education	28
Sport	36
Ashwell Life	42
Youth Organisations	46
Charity Groups	50
Weddings	56
Ashwell Projects	62
Clubs and Societies	70
Church and Chapel	76
Events	86
Ashwell Weather and Farming Diary	106
Gallery	108
Those We Have Lost	112
Local Services	122

Yearbook Working Group

Norton Mahy, Team Leader, Parish Council representative, County, District and Parish Council reports, Clubs and Societies reports, Ashwell Projects

Jamie Victor Hamilton, Design and layout

Gill Field, Ashwell Life, Production assistant

Margaret Budgen, Photography

Laura Brooks-Payne, Advertisements

Madeleine Legg, Weddings and Obituaries

Eileen ten Hove, Church & Chapel reports

Julie Darts, Sport reports

Debbie Toombs, Proof reader

Cliff Jenkinson, Community Groups, Education, Events, Youth Organisations and Charity reports, Local Services and General Editor

Front Page: "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them." Photo: Peter John Gates

Ashwell Parish Council would like to thank the children of Ashwell Primary School for their wonderful art work, which features so attractively throughout this Yearbook. **Disclaimer:** Any views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and are not to be taken as representing the views of the publishers, Ashwell Parish Council.

A photograph of a green field with a church spire in the distance under a blue sky with clouds.

ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report

When you read this report I am optimistic that Ashwell's first Referendum will either have taken place or there will be a scheduled date for the village community to vote on our own Neighbourhood Plan. At the time of writing, the Plan has been approved by the Examiner and it is in the hands of North Herts District Council (NHDC), which is responsible for managing the Referendum process. If the Referendum hasn't yet taken place I urge you to exercise your democratic right to vote, to show that Ashwell residents really care about their village and how its future is managed. More information about the Plan and its status will be available on the Parish Council website or at NHDC using the following link: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/approved-neighbourhood-areas-ashwell>

During the spring, NHDC will also be deciding whether to accept the recommendations of the Parish Council to extend parts of the existing village Conservation Area. The proposed extensions are designed to eliminate some inconsistencies in the current Conservation Area and to give additional protection to the visual character of historic or distinctive buildings, and also the village boundaries where the built areas of the village end and the rural, agricultural land starts. This should avoid further creeping sprawl of the village and it reflects the policies and objectives identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

One of the objectives I set last year was to improve communication about the Parish Council's role in the local community. One example of how we achieved that was the part we played in communicating the stage by

stage role-out the Covid-19 vaccination programme. By liaising with the Ashwell and Bassingbourn Patients Group (ABPG) and the Surgery we provided regular updates via the Parish Council website and Facebook page. A similar service was also provided by the Ashwell Hub social media pages. I continue to represent not only Ashwell but also the other villages served by the Surgery as a member of the ABPG. Please contact Peter Chapman of ABPG or myself about any matters you

Another topic that hit the attention of all us in 2021 was the COP 26 Environment Conference in Glasgow. One way or another, we are all experiencing some effect of global warming. I firmly believe that we shouldn't leave it to the politicians and Government to provide all the answers and necessary actions to reduce our CO2 emissions. Every individual can take actions to help and I like to think that, as a community, we may be able to come together and make a more significant contribution to reducing the total carbon consumption of Ashwell. Anyone who has an expertise or interest in this topic would be welcome to liaise with the Parish Council.

To be notified about any of the activities that the Parish Council gets involved with, you can sign up on the Parish Council website to receive email notifications. You can either receive all updates or you can select those specific items that interest you. And if you have any questions or comments about anything that interests you or concerns you about Ashwell please phone or send an email to any one of the Councillors or Jane Porter, our friendly and knowledgeable Clerk. Thank you.

Graham Lee

Chairman, Ashwell Parish Council

ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL



Elected Parish Councillors



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The Parish Council Office is at 6A Back Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5PE ☎ 743706 📍 www.ashwell.gov.uk



Parish Council information

To access current information concerning the Parish Council and the Ashwell community, or to sign up to receive regular email updates on specific items of interest, please visit the Ashwell website: www.ashwell.gov.uk

To sign up for the updates, go to the foot of the webpage: www.ashwell.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings

Alternatively, contact the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Chairman or individual Councillors.

All are welcome to attend meetings of the Parish Council and there is an opportunity to speak in the 'Open Forum'. Meetings take place on the first Wednesday of each month and start at 8:00 pm. Owing to Covid restrictions some meetings in 2021 were held on Zoom and we are continuing to provide this option. Sign up via the website, or send in a request to be emailed a link with logon details. Our District Councillor, Tom Tyson, and County Councillor, Steve Jarvis, are also invited and routinely attend.

Council meetings are minuted as soon as possible after they have taken place and draft minutes are put on to the website. An archive of approved past minutes can also be found there. Every month a summary of the Parish Council meeting appears in the 'Parish Council Matters' section of the Ashwell Village News.

Copies of this summary are also displayed on the main Parish Council notice board by the Rose and Crown and on the small Parish Council notice board in the bus shelter in Station Road, opposite the War Memorial.

If important issues arise newsletters are published and delivered to every household.

Parish Council Representatives and Trustees on Other Bodies

Cllr Gemma Allan liaises with Ashwell Primary School and reports to and from the Parish Council on relevant matters as needed.

Cllr Martin Hoffman is the Chairman of the Trustees of Ashwell Village Museum in his own right and reports to and from the Parish Council on relevant matters as needed.

The Chairman, **Cllr Graham Lee**, is the representative of the Parish Council in matters relating to the Village Hall.

Cllr Graham Lee is also Chairman of the Ashwell Village Trust. Cllrs Mark White, David Sims and the Parish Clerk, Jane Porter, are Trustees. The Trust owns the Cottage Garden, which is managed by a group of volunteers (see pages 17 and 18 for reports).



High summer and hollyhocks in Gardiners Lane.

Local Government Responsibilities

Who does what and whom to contact?

The three tiers of local government – Parish, District and County – supply most of the services provided in towns and villages. For details of services provided by Ashwell Parish Council please see pages 17-18, for North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council please see page 15. Contact details for other local services can be found on page 122 - 127.

If you would like to see your organisation's report and photographs in the next edition of the Ashwell Yearbook then, before the end of November 2022, please contact:

Parish Council Office
☎ 743706 or
✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

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Ashwell Cemetery.

Arbury Banks

Last year I wrote about the 'Beacons of the Past' project and its LiDAR survey of the Chiltern Hills. At that time the data was all in and analysis work had started. Arbury Banks is at the extreme North Eastern end of its range.

The survey produced high resolution maps of the area. There have been fly-overs before but the new technology is a big improvement over conventional aerial photography. As the aircraft flies it takes around 500 images per second of the ground below. I understand that this allows it to see the same scene from many slightly different angles and therefore peer through the vegetation to subtle features in the ground below. Use of software that allows the digital maps to be enhanced with false colour, or for discontinuities to be exaggerated, then makes it still easier to pick out things of interest. Having seen a small example I can tell you that, even so, the analysis is still a bit of a challenge!

Volunteers are doing the work. Apparently, it is going slowly and there's still time to join up. A one-day course will prepare you and there's no obligation to commit to a certain number of hours. If you would like to help out, please go to the website: <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/beacons-of-the-past.html>

Any new features identified may be compared with other data sources, such as tithe maps, or prompt further investigation to provide new insights into our area's history.

The rest of the land around the Parish has not had a LiDAR survey. South Cambridgeshire did one but that stopped at the boundary over toward Odsey. Though the Department of Environment plans to cover the gap, there is no fixed date for this. As far as the Department's LiDAR current imagery is concerned, it is patchy around here but it does have other data that show local features. Historic England has a web page: <https://historicengland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d45dabecf5541f18255e12e5cd5f85a>

That is quite a lot of typing, but worth a look. It is possible to zoom in to Ashwell. The layers icon (top right of screen) allows different data sources to be viewed either individually or together.

Cllr Martin G Hoffman

Ashwell Cemetery

The Parish owns the Cemetery in Station Road. It is managed and maintained by the Parish Council which employs a regular contractor for grounds maintenance and commission tree works as necessary.

There is space for both full burials and the interment of ashes.

Preferential rates are charged for parishioners and for those who have previously lived here. For interments or the reservation of plots, please contact the Parish Council office. Details are also on the website: www.ashwell.gov.uk

The Chapel of Rest is available for small services through the tenant, Neville Funeral Service, that leases it from the Parish Council. Following the recent redecoration of the building and the refurbishment of the original Arts and Crafts furnishings, the chapel makes a suitable venue for those wishing to hold both a small service and an interment at the Cemetery. Please contact Neville's for details (see their advertisement on page 27).

Members of the Parish Council are always pleased to receive suggestions or observations to help us in the management of the Cemetery. Please contact the Parish Clerk.

Jane Porter, Parish Clerk ☎ 743706
✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

Recreation Ground, Pavilion, Children's Playground and Public Toilets

So, 2021 might not have been the refreshing antidote to 2020 that we were all hoping for, but we have finished the year on a great note. At the very end of 2021 we were informed that we had been awarded the grants we had applied for through the Henry Colbron Trust. The money will go directly, and only, to the revamping of the playground.

All this means that in early 2022 we will once again be calling on the under 18s of the village to lend us their invaluable minds in a renewed consultation. We are specifically looking to revamp the skateboard area, as well as adding additional equipment by the fence line on Station Road. There are many options available to us but the last thing we want to do is make the wrong choice. We will, therefore, make sure that the young people of the village are front and centre of this decision. After all, this is for them.

Unfortunately, the Pavilion project was another victim of Covid. Understandably, the likes of the Lottery Fund and Sports England are redirecting the funds we would need to essential, grassroots causes. We are, however, hoping to start a project to improve the toilet facilities on the Recreation Ground, which we can all agree is much needed. I am personally feeling very positive about 2022. With a fair wind, we shall achieve!

Cllr Gemma Allan

Public Rights of Way - Footpaths

I would like to begin this section by giving special mention to the sad passing in 2021 of Martin Lush who did so much over many years for Ashwell by the management, maintenance and development of Ashwell's footpaths and the maintenance of the Springs. They were all heavily used and much appreciated in 2021 by residents and visitors alike.

We have continued to receive excellent support from Julia Clarke, the officer responsible for Countryside & Rights of Way and the Environment & Infrastructure at Herts County Council and from the actions of Steve Jarvis, our County Councillor and Tom Tyson, our District Councillor.

The Ruddery Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT), which forms part of the ancient Icknield Way, is a rural, unmetalled, tree-lined track for the primary benefit of pedestrians. Unfortunately, in recent years it has become increasingly used by delivery vehicles and some local residents as a shortcut between Kingsland Way and Station Road. Unnecessary vehicular use is damaging the track and imposing a safety risk on pedestrians, including schoolchildren using the track to get to the school, cyclists and horse riders. We have asked Herts County Council to undertake a consultation process with legitimate users and we hope they will take action to restrict through-access by 4-wheel vehicles by installing bollards at the Woodforde Close end of the track.

Pedestrian / Cycle Path to Ashwell & Morden Station. On behalf of the Parish Council, Guy Reed has been liaising with NHDC and their consultation process with a view to progressing the proposal to create a footpath extension to the station. This involves Herts County Council and Cambs County Council working together over the plan and its funding and for the landowner to provide a right of way with safe separation from the roadway.

For details of access to public rights of way throughout Hertfordshire, use the following link: [Webmaps - Rights of Way \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/). Zoom in via your mouse to access Ashwell footpaths or those in the rest of Hertfordshire.

Any Ashwell resident with concerns about Public Rights of Way in Ashwell can contact the Parish Council or HCC directly using their 'Report a Fault' page.

Cllr Graham Lee



Fancy a swim? Image by Jordan Thomas.

The Springs

It has been a quieter year for the Springs. As the lockdown eased, the numbers of visitors fell considerably. Although the pressure was off there were still jobs to do and, of course, routine tidying. It's still a popular spot. What with the built-up area of the village and the surrounding working farmland, there isn't a great deal of public space around. To keep its appeal, the Parish Council has been thinking about how to manage litter better and what bins it should provide in the future.

Once again, the annual safety inspection in July revealed no problems, largely thanks to the efforts of volunteers who still give their time willingly to care for the site.

The death of Martin Lush in August 2021 was very sad, a great loss to the village, and the Springs in particular. He led its working party of volunteers for many years, so the credit for it continuing to be such a valuable local resource was in a large part down to him. Martin was a fine example of the value that a villager can contribute toward Ashwell's special character and he is greatly missed. His will be a hard act to follow, but followed it must be, because a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) like this needs curating to preserve its unique characteristics.

Hertfordshire's Countryside Management Service agreed to get involved and made an initial visit last December but there will always be room for those willing to lend a hand. The Parish Council arranged some minor work on fencing and tree work in the Autumn but the real work will begin in the Spring.

As time goes on, it appears that global warming is beginning to have some impact. In particular, in the form of heavier and more seasonal rainfall. That brings both a benefit and a drawback. Flow rates have been looking good all year round. Higher rates help to wash undesirable silt off the gravel bed. On the other hand, erosion of the banks has to be monitored more closely.

The Springs will remain a much-loved semi-wild space in the heart of Ashwell.

Cllr Martin G. Hoffman



A wooden carving found at the springs.

Keeping Ashwell Tidy and Attractive

We have litter picking equipment in the parish office that we can loan to you. It's an ideal excuse to get out into the fresh air with an added feel good factor too! Many thanks to those who have done this already.

Cllr Norton Mahy



St Mary's Church yard.

St Mary's Churchyard

As the Churchyard is 'closed for burials' the Parish Council has a legal requirement to maintain the grounds. That obligation does not extend to the graves or the lych gate which are the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council.

As with other sites, such as the Springs, there is a regular check on the trees. Keeping them safe is a constant and costly undertaking, owing to their size and age, though the amount of trimming and lopping does vary from year to year. Parish Council reserves are kept topped up to meet the occasional big bill. It is worth that effort to provide such a lovely setting for our ancient Grade 1 listed Church.

A contractor regularly cuts the grass on part of the Churchyard and keeps the paths clear. A team of parishioners is re-wilding the remainder as part of a 'living churchyards' initiative promoted by the Diocese. Sarah Talks has written a few words about this project on page 63 of this Yearbook.

Cllr Martin G. Hoffman

War Memorial

There is plenty in this issue of the Yearbook about the War Memorial. It's just worth noting here that it had a thorough clean in 2021. There are still some repairs to do to the stone and these are scheduled in the coming year.

By the time of the re-dedication service on 4th December 2021 it was looking dignified and handsome, dressed as it was in poppies and greenery, thanks to the efforts of volunteers.

The re-dedication service was a short but moving ceremony that closely followed the format and content of the original held on 4th December 1921. A strong contingent from the British Legion and other villagers took part in the service, led by Rev'ds Chris Campbell and Lindsay Dew. The sight of the standard bearer battling the cold wind and the sound of Martin Mc Beal doing the same on the pipes only served to enhance the occasion.

Cllr Norton Mahy



Ashwell Lock Up.

The Parish Clock

The Parish Council is responsible for the clock on the church tower.

Ashwell Lock Up

Our grade II listed building is part of a larger network of old lock ups, cages and prisons that David Short has mapped out in his Historical Atlas of Hertfordshire (2011). For those interested in the topic in general, try the following web page:

<https://www.prisonhistory.org/2021/09/hertfordshire-lock-ups-cages-and-prisons/>

As further reading there is a generous mention in David's 1997 publication *Snippets of Ashwell's History, Volume I*. Both the above publications are available from the Museum.

Our grounds maintenance officer gives the lock up the occasional look-over to ensure all stays well.

Cllr Norton Mahy

Small Gains Allotments

It has been another good year at the Small Gains allotments, apart from the unpredictable weather. All the plots are occupied at the moment but if you wish to rent a plot it is always worthwhile putting your name on the waiting list because plots can become vacant very quickly.

A big thank you to Hamish for repairing the water tank and always being available if any help or advice is needed.

Later we are hoping to have another smaller water tank at the other end of the plots, which should make life easier for tenants at the car park end.

Security still remains a problem but with the help of allotment holders, Chris Brabrook the PCSO, and the Accies, vandalism and theft have been greatly reduced.

The Parish Council has its own tree-planting scheme, which is now in its final phase. We will have planted three Silver Birch, one Rowan, and a Crab Apple, plus several metres of native hedging plants all of which should have been planted in Small Gains by January 2022, making it a greener and friendly place.

Cllr D Sims

The Parish Council Finances

2021-22 Actual spend

The budgeted spend for 2021-22 was £90,380 and the actual spend is expected to be almost the same at £91,000. Full details will be on the Parish Council website after the year end, in April.

Budget for 2022-23

In the coming year the Parish Council has approved a budget spend of £96,359 (+6.6%). The increase is mostly due to putting aside funds for works needed to the war memorial (£2,300), essential repairs to the pavilion and public toilets (£2,000) and an increase in grants for community support (up by £1,000).

Costs are covered by the precept, raised as part of your council tax, along with some income from burials at the cemetery, and rents. The precept will go up by 2.75% but, as the village's tax base has increased this year, the estimated effect will be an increase of only 93 pence for a Band D taxpayer.

With income raised, the Parish Council manages and maintains our good range of facilities and services. On behalf of the village it owns the Recreation Ground with its pavilion and public toilets, the Springs, the Cemetery, the allotments and football field at Small

Gains. It spends significant sums on routine grounds maintenance and on keeping trees safe and healthy. Then there are litter bins, benches and playground equipment to maintain.

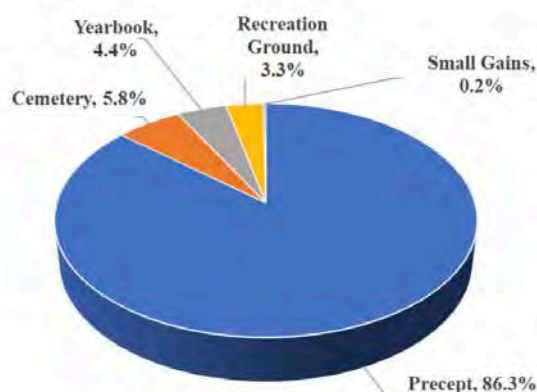
For St Mary's Church we fund the annual service and repairs to the clock and grounds maintenance of the Churchyard. There are grants to local organisations such as the Museum. We work with the District Council and the County Council to make Ashwell's interests heard and we contribute financially to enhance routine street cleaning, trimming verges and some of the highways initiatives that Hertfordshire provides.

This all takes money. But it is worth pointing out that the cost would be much higher were it not for our volunteers who willingly contribute their spare time to help out. This Yearbook is a prime example of that willingness – from those who contribute articles right through to the team that puts it through every door in the Parish.

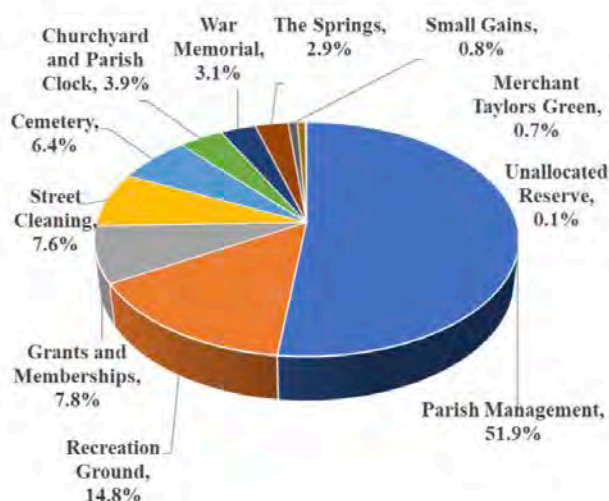
The external auditors approved the Parish's accounts for 2020 – 21 without any qualifications, as has been the case in previous years. Being both accountable and transparent, the Parish Council makes its accounts and supporting details available to the public via its website: <https://www.ashwell.gov.uk>. Alternatively, you can contact the Clerk, Mon-Thurs between 09:00 and 13:00 at: The Parish Council Office at Bear Farm,

6a Back Street, SG7 5PE ☎ 743706 ✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

Income - Total £96,465



Expenditure and Reserve Contribution - Total £96,465



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Hertfordshire County Councillor's Report



I should begin by thanking all those who were instrumental in re-electing me to the County Council in May. It is a great privilege to be able to spend another four years representing Ashwell and I will continue to do what I can to help all the residents whenever I can.

Looking back at what I and others wrote for last year's Ashwell Yearbook, I was reminded that at the time we all expected that the world would be back to its pre-March 2020 position before too much longer. That now seems much less likely, with the probability that there will be some changes that will persist in the longer term. We have learnt that there are some things that we can do effectively online – I now spend much less time driving to and from Hertford, which has environmental benefits as well as saving time that can be spent more productively.

The County Council continues to need to spend more on providing care for vulnerable adults, with more people requiring care, the NHS needing to discharge people from hospital as soon as possible and difficulties recruiting care staff. There has also unfortunately been an increase in the number of children that the Council is looking after, as a result of the disruption caused to families by the pandemic. The government has provided some additional money to deal with these Covid impacts, but it looks increasingly likely that the additional costs will continue long after these funds are exhausted.

Turning to local issues, there have unfortunately been some delays in the plan to build traffic calming at West End. The work was just about to start when a problem with the design was identified by the safety auditors. This has now been resolved and I hope that the work will be done early in 2022 – roughly a year after originally planned. At the other end of the village there are plans to make some changes to the Lucas Lane/Station Road junction and provide some more pavement in Station Road.

I hope that in the slightly longer term it may be possible to extend the 20mph limit to Station Road as well.

Further afield, work has now been completed on changes to the Litlington junction on the A505, which had a marginally worse accident record than the Odsey junction. I am now pursuing plans to deal with other junctions. Although some minor works have been done at both Odsey and Slip End, much more is required to make these junctions as safe as they should be.

One really good news story is the HertsLynx* demand responsive bus service which serves Ashwell and the other villages in the eastern part of North Herts. This provides a service that can be booked on line or by phone that can take people to any of the nearby towns or another village, but that only runs if and when somebody wants to use it. Usage has picked up quickly and it appears to have attracted people who have not previously been bus users. Whilst not many people in Ashwell can get by without access to a car, this service does provide a real alternative for some journeys.

Please get in touch if you want to know more or if there are issues that you think I might be able to help with.

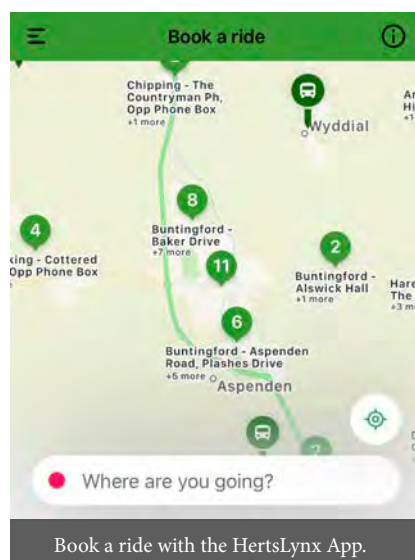
Steve Jarvis, County Councillor

✉ steve.jarvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk

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North Hertfordshire Councillor's Report



It's been another year of ups and downs and learning to live with the coronavirus pandemic in its various forms. NHS staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly all year at our vaccination centres and deserve our admiration and gratitude. As new variants of the virus emerge, their work is essential in helping us to lead our lives as normally as possible.

One outcome from the early months of the pandemic was North Herts Council's move to online meetings. To allow public access, they were shown on the Council's new YouTube channel. Although the government refused to allow virtual meetings to continue after May 2021, the Council has continued to provide the YouTube link to meetings wherever possible. The public can either attend meetings in person as before, or watch proceedings on the video platform at a time of their choice.

District Council elections held in May 2021 did not directly affect Ashwell, as Arbury ward is not due for an election until 2023. The Council's administration continues to be run jointly by Labour and Liberal Democrat members. However, a requirement from the Local Government Electoral Commission means that the Council is undergoing an electoral review. The purpose of this is to re-balance the number of ward members elected to make sure it is proportionate to the number of residents. This is likely to result in changes to ward boundaries and an adjustment to the overall number of councillors. As an initial stage in the process, the Council decided at an emergency meeting in December 2021 to move to a four-yearly cycle of elections, with all ward seats coming up for election at the same time. You can see the debate on this on our YouTube channel.

Local issues continue to focus on the consequences of the increasing amount of traffic in the village, worries about over-development and the problem of fly tipping and litter.

The District Council is responsible for enforcing parking restrictions, and tickets were issued in Ashwell this year – to the surprise of the unwary. Arbury ward has the second highest amount of fly tipping in the district, so in April 2021 I seconded a Council motion to raise awareness of this nuisance in rural areas and bolster the good work already being done to combat it. The Council has been campaigning on social media to ensure that everyone knows the laws around the disposal of rubbish and what services the Council provides. In May 2021, members of the Planning Control Committee voted unanimously to refuse permission for a large development on the outskirts of the village. In September, Council passed a motion calling upon the government to scrap its Planning White Paper, aimed at undermining the involvement of local communities in planning applications and giving developers more influence. It is essential that local people have a say in the building that takes place around them.

During the year, Community Grants were awarded to the Greening Ashwell group and Ashwell Preschool, and a substantial sum has been set aside for new play equipment for the rec. North Herts Council also launched the distribution of 10,000 tree saplings to residents, free on request, as part of our work to combat climate change.

Tom Tyson, District Councillor, Arbury Ward

☎ 07546 589377

✉ tom.tyson@north-herts.gov.uk

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COMMUNITY GROUPS



One of the many factors which make Ashwell such a vibrant and happy place is the high level of voluntary contributions made by Ashwellians towards organising community groups and projects. You can read about the achievements of these groups and projects in the following pages. The Parish Council is very conscious of the value of this work and would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those involved.

If you would be interested in volunteering to help the community yourself, please see page 26 at the end of this section of the Ashwell Yearbook for a list of some of the possible ways in which you might become involved.

Ashwell Housing Association Limited



Ashwell Housing Association owns ten properties in Back Street, which were built around 1979. We have two bungalows, four flats (one of which is a small studio flat) and four 3-bedroom houses. All are let to local people, or those with very strong connections to the village. First Garden City Homes carry out routine maintenance for us and also provide an excellent management service and give us advice on tenant management when necessary.

We started the year as we ended 2020, holding our meetings via Zoom. However, we have recently started to meet again in person, which is much more satisfactory. The year has been a quiet one for us although we are in the process of planning some major works to the properties. These are works that were identified in the structural survey that was carried out last year and we hope they will be started next spring.

Our honorary treasurer moved away last year but I am pleased to report that we have now recruited a replacement - Gary Feast has joined us and is already proving invaluable. Two more long standing members resigned during the year: Andy Bartlett left us in the spring, although we have already had reason to seek his advice on some building matters; and Alison Murray resigned at our AGM in September. She had been on the committee for many years and had contributed a great deal. We will miss her! We are always on the lookout for new members to join us. It does not take up a great deal of time as we meet four or five times a year, so if you are at all interested, please give me a call.

Liz Fitzsimmons, Chairman ☎ 742722

Ashwell Village Trust

In 1968 the garden created by villager Albert Skerman on derelict land next to his cottage in Swan Street was threatened with development. The village raised funds to save it. In 1986 another threat to its future was averted and a charity, the Ashwell Village Trust, was set up to administer the garden. See its charity statement on the Ashwell Charities page of the Ashwell Parish Council's website: www.ashwell.gov.uk

The charity stipulates that its chairman should be the Chairman of the Parish Council, together with two other members of the Council as Trustees. The current Trustees are Graham Lee (Chairman), Simon Bettany (Hon Treasurer), Amanda Bettany, Gordon Hill, Claire Moynihan, Liz Moynihan, Jane Porter with David Sims and Mark White (Parish Council Trustees).

In recent years the Trust AGM took place before the June Parish Council meeting. However, with no meetings for the last two years, it is hoped to have a separate meeting to allow matters to be discussed in more detail. Members of the public will be welcome.

Huge thanks go to the band of hard-working volunteers, led by Martyn Hird, who meet monthly to look after the garden. Please see Martyn's report which follows.

Donations to support the Trust can be made via the Parish Council Clerk: ✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

Liz Moynihan, Trustee ☎ 742363 ✉ docdocfergus@gmail.com



Ann Angus and Barbara Godsman enjoying the garden.

Moss Cottage Homes



Moss Cottage Homes in Hodwell provide six one-bedroom cottages at an affordable rent, primarily for residents of Ashwell. We are a member of the Almshouse Association.

At the beginning of 2021 Rosemary Pearch, after serving four years as Clerk to the Trustees, stepped down from her role. The Yearbook seems an appropriate place to thank Rosemary publicly for the support and service she gave the residents and Trustees during this time. We now welcome Natalie Terry as the new Clerk. She brings with her a background in estate administration and has already proved to be a knowledgeable member of our small team.

Another new member of our committee is the Reverend Chris Campbell, who, in her capacity as Rector of St Mary's, automatically assumes the role of a Trustee. We say goodbye to David Richards who has now stepped down after he agreed to stay on until a new Rector had been appointed. We thank him for his wise counsel during our meetings.

After maintenance work had to be put on hold because of Covid restrictions, we are now resuming our planned programme of improvements to the cottages.

The current Trustees in alphabetical order are Rev'd Christine Campbell, Rachel Godschalk, Cliff Jenkinson, Madeleine Legg (Chair), Jane Munns, Ann Robertshaw, Phillida Shaw, John Rhodes and Sarah Talks.

Madeleine Legg, Chair of Trustees ☎ 742385

More information is available from:

Natalie Terry, Clerk to the Trustees ☎ 742948

Ashwell Cottage Garden

Many newcomers to Ashwell will be unaware that the Cottage Garden was first created by an enthusiastic group of villagers over 50 years ago, when the original plot of land was saved from development considered detrimental to what is an ancient part of the village. Purchased primarily by the village for the village, the Cottage Garden is administered by Ashwell Village Trust, ensuring its protection in the years ahead.

Gardens are continuously evolving, and the Cottage Garden is no exception. Throughout 2021, two of the main beds were being developed, primarily by reducing overcrowding caused by prolific low-level plants, coupled with appropriate new planting. New plant selection has been based on enhancing year-round appeal in terms of structure, texture, colour and scent. Currently one bed is complete and the other is at an advanced stage.

It is always most rewarding to witness residents and visitors alike enjoying the peace and beauty of the Cottage Garden, fulfilling the primary objective of its creators to provide a community space for all to enjoy.

Everyday care of the Cottage Garden falls to a pool of committed volunteers, who ensure the garden is maintained and remains an attractive area in which to spend time or to admire when passing. Drawing on a pool of over twenty volunteers, monthly working parties meet on designated days throughout the year. Many of the current pool have been actively involved for many years. At the time of the garden's Golden Anniversary in 2018, five of the volunteers still active had been involved for the previous 50 years!

As ever, grateful thanks go to all volunteers and other supporters involved, both past and present; this is particularly so in view of the challenges and constraints on numbers presented by Covid-19. These thanks include those volunteers who now, and in the past, have kindly removed the herbaceous output of each monthly working party and fastidiously kept the surrounding hedge in pristine condition.

Martyn Hird

✉ iona1996@aol.com



If you would like to see your organisation's report and photographs in the next edition of the Ashwell Yearbook then, before the end of November 2022, please contact:

Parish Council Office

☎ 743706 or
✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk

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COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ashwell & Bassingbourn Patients' Group

The purpose of the group is to foster good relations between our surgeries and their patients. We meet roughly every two months to discuss matters of local and national concern. However, in between times there are frequently less formal exchanges, as matters arise in the community which require prompt attention. We are delighted to count the Senior Partner, Practice Manager and Operations Manager as active members. The full committee is:

Peter Chapman (Chair) – Ashwell
Dr Matthew Jarvis
Katie Prince (Practice Manager)
Linda Johnson (Operations Manager)
Graham Lee (Representing Parish Councils)
Mike Peach - Ashwell,
Wendy Kitchener - Edworth
Harry King - Hinxworth
Andrea Rowland - Steeple Morden
Detlev Popp - Guilden Morden
Hilary Hodge - Bassingbourn
Tessa Cathcart – Bassingbourn

With our new Practice Manager, Katie Prince, in place and, given the turmoil general practice and patients have had to endure since the pandemic began, we thought it appropriate to invite Katie and Dr Jarvis to share their thoughts with us as we enter a new and hopefully calmer new year.

Peter Chapman

✉ peterchapman70@yahoo.co.uk

As we look over the past twelve months and in fact the last two years, primary care, along with society overall, has seen significant change owing to the Covid pandemic. In addition to the challenges that the pandemic has presented, the workplace changes have also presented their own challenges to both the Practice and to you, as patients.

These challenges will continue into the new year and beyond, as we learn to live with and adapt our lives around Covid.

The newer ways of working, such as offering remote consultations, have allowed primary care to almost double its capacity. However, GP and staff burnout is a major concern. Recruitment of doctors and other healthcare professionals to primary care is a national

issue and one that will persist as a challenge facing Ashwell Surgery.

Our priorities as a Surgery over the coming year are to continue exploring new ways of working; embracing new technologies that enable us to be more effective and accessible to patients. We will continue to support our Primary Care Network with the delivery of the Covid Vaccination programme.

The role of the Ashwell and Bassingbourn patients' group, as it has always been, will be to continue to support communication between the Surgery and our patient population. The patient group is crucial in communicating changes positively within primary care to our patient community. With the emergence of new healthcare professionals not seen in primary care before, such as Physicians Associates and Clinical Pharmacists and the changes to how services are accessed, such as online consultations, NHS Apps, or via the telephone, it is important that the patient group understands these changes and can continue to provide feedback in both directions as to the impact they have on both the Surgery and patients.

On behalf of the entire Surgery, we would like to wish you all a very happy 2022.

Katie Prince, Practice Manager

Dr Matthew Jarvis, Senior GP Partner



Ashwell Surgery.

The Book Swap

Since the library service ceased to function in Ashwell the Book Swap facility has taken its place. St Mary's Church provides the Parish Church Room as the venue and, with a few volunteers, we are now well established. The service is free of charge and there is no signing in or out of books – if you have a book in good condition to swap just bring it along and exchange it for another. However, you do not even need to bring a book to swap in order to borrow one. But please do not bring boxes or bags full of books – keep those for the October Book Weekend.

Despite lockdowns, the Book Swap facility remained available whenever the Post Office was open and we had a steady stream of borrowers. Thanks to the Book Weekend we were able to change all our stock of books in October. Teresa King did an excellent job in keeping the books in order and selling those we no longer needed for a nominal fee. Any money made goes to St Mary's Tower Fund.

In normal times the Book Swap Café is open on the third Saturday of each month (please note the change from the second Saturday and check Ashwell Village News for any variation) between 10:30 am and noon when coffee, tea and biscuits (cake if you are lucky) for a mere 50p are on offer while you browse. During 2021 we were unable to open until September but from then on we were delighted to welcome old friends and new. We look forward to having the Café open in every month of 2022 and, of course, the Book Swap is available during Post Office opening hours.

Eileen ten Hove

✉ etenhove01@john-lewis.com

on behalf of the Book Swap team

Sign up for regular information
about the village at:

www.ashwell.gov.uk

Ashwell Village Hall



Ashwell village hall, main hall.

The Hall has gradually recovered from the effects of the pandemic. Several of the users returned last summer, while some groups continued to operate out of doors. Some of the others were able to include remote participants, using the new Zoom facility. Herts Performing Arts ran a 5-day workshop during the summer holidays and from September most of our regular users have returned.

The following groups are now using the hall: Cubs and Scouts, Pre-School, Theatre Club, Brownies, Pilates, AJS Fitness, Yoga, Zumba, Ashwell Dance, Circle Dance, Karate, Ashwell Big Sing and the Parish Council.

Several children's parties are taking place as people catch up on celebrations missed during the period of Covid.

During the summer break, following a leak, heating pipes were rerouted to fix it and prevent future leakage issues. The garden area has been refurbished – the surface has been levelled and a porous play surface installed to reduce the risk of water flooding into the Hall. (For a full report on this project, please see page 65.) Much of this work was done by volunteers, which reduced the cost significantly.

Volunteers to assist with routine tasks such as publicity, utility management, and maintenance are always welcome.

Efforts to convert the Hall, now a regulated charity, to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, continue.

<http://ashwellvillagehall.org.uk>

Michael Pearch, Chairman ☎ 742913

✉ mjpearch@btinternet.com

Rosemary Pearch, Clerk ☎ 742913 / 07929 972079

✉ rosypearch@live.com

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ashwell Walks

Ashwell Walks is a free downloadable podcast that guides you through several historic routes in the village. The walks have been presented and researched by Dr Sally Fletcher, a long-time resident. The podcast can be found on Spotify, Google Podcasts and Apple Podcasts, or you can listen to or read it on our Weebly site <https://ashwellwalks.weebly.com/>

We have had great feedback this year, such as:

“Just wanted to thank you for the podcasts. Just listened to No 3 about the ghosts of Ashwell, and did the walk. Sally’s narration was fantastic especially the outtakes. We were staying at the motorhome site, and it was great to learn a little about the village.”

and’

“I have read your Ashwell Pub Crawl walk and it is very interesting. I am a descendant of Decimus Covington so it was good to see him mentioned.”

We currently have three walks: Foraging, Pub, and Ghost walks. If you have any ideas for walks you would like to see, or if you would like to create and narrate one, please email us.

Diane Jacoutot and Sally Fletcher

✉ ashwellwalks@gmail.com



Sunday Afternoon Teas



Cath Connolly enjoying some cake and a cuppa with Guy and Hilary McKenzie.

As Ashwell emerged cautiously from the social restrictions of lockdown towards the end of July, Sunday afternoon teas at the Parish Rooms gave residents the long-awaited opportunity to get together and catch up over a pot of tea and some delicious home-made cakes and scones. Having not taken place at all during 2020, the event quickly re-established itself in the community.

We also welcomed visitors from as far afield as Bedford, Hertford and even London, who enjoyed strolling around Ashwell, visiting the Museum and then enjoying a well-earned cuppa! Some lovely sunny weather brought the opportunity to enjoy teas ‘al fresco’ as well.

Huge thanks to all who have baked and served – many regular faces, with some new volunteers as well – and most especially to everyone who bought tea and cakes. £904 was raised in total, which is a significant contribution to the ongoing maintenance and repairs of St Mary’s Church.

Volunteers are always needed so, if you would like to help, either by baking or serving (you don’t have to be a church-goer), or if you know a young person who is looking for a Duke of Edinburgh volunteering opportunity, then please do get in touch.

We look forward to seeing you again in the Spring.

Cath Connolly

✉ cathconnolly41@sky.com

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Ashwell Village Museum.

Ashwell Village Museum



Having fixed the leak in the store roof, everything was set to prepare for public re-opening but it was decided to not to go ahead until all social restrictions were removed. This turned out to be June. However, throughout the autumn we have been gradually bringing back our regular events and volunteer curatorial sessions.

In November we hosted a launch evening for two books of local interest that can be purchased from the Museum. *The Ashwell Museum Historical Cookery Book* by Anne Fletcher runs through cooking practices up to the 20th Century, with special reference to local recipes. *Ashwell Buildings and Antiquities* by David Short sets out the current state of our historical and architectural knowledge of all the buildings in the village.

The year ended with our Advent window for all to peer in, to view The Boar's Head and the Yule Log of a Medieval Christmas.

Behind the scenes, the other main work of the year has been the re-building of our website. The ten-year-old site was considered 'unsafe' and taken down. However, the Heritage Lottery Fund came to the rescue and gave us a grant to completely update it, so in future it will be a much more user-friendly experience on all devices. You can search through (and add to) the Community Archive of Ashwell History and the entire collection of over 10,000 objects, documents and images in the Museum collection. Thank you to all those who have helped in the preparation of the data for this big task and the newly trained editors who will keep the website up to date. Do take a look at: www.ashwellmuseum.org.uk

The costs of caring for the collection and the building are always rising – even if we can't open. The Museum Lottery has again been our main fund raiser and is always hoping for new subscribers. With the help of the Trustees, the Friends, the Cleaning Team and curatorial volunteers, we will continue to care for the collection you have placed in our hands for posterity, answer any nagging historical questions and welcome you all.

Peter Greener and Sarah Talks

☎ 742956

✉ enquiries@ashwellmuseum.org.uk

Friends of Ashwell Village Museum

As most residents of Ashwell know, the Friends of the Museum primarily support the Museum Trustees in keeping the Museum open on Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays; for visiting groups at other times; and for special events, such as Ashwell at Home. We have a stalwart team of volunteers for this, as well as another team of volunteers who regularly go in to keep the Museum clean and spotless, to ensure all visitors see us looking tidy and welcoming. Please do let us know if you could give us an hour or two during the year to help.

Other people also help us run Sunday Teas in the Parish Room during the winter and this has given us a boost to our funds. Thank you to St Mary's for allowing us to use the Parish Room.

The Friends also arrange talks and a few day trips and we are very grateful for the support we have been given by Ashwellians when we arrange these. All profits made go into the Museum funds. Obviously, we have not been able to do much throughout the pandemic but we started again in October 2021 with a fascinating talk by local farmer, Sam Wallace, on the history of farming in Ashwell. It was great to see our supporters back again.

Looking ahead to 2022, our AGM will be held on 2nd March with a talk by the architect of the Museum Restoration Project. On June 8th we hope to welcome back Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews from North Herts Museum Service to give a talk. These events will be held in the URC Hall. We are also planning a coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on Thursday 28th April. This had been planned for 2020 but had to be postponed. Please contact us if you are interested.

From the money we have raised, we have been able to buy things for the Museum that Peter Greener, our Curator, and his assistant, Sarah Talks, urgently needed. They and the Museum Trustees greatly appreciate our contributions.

Our committee is quite small, comprising Jill Powell, David Hall, Karen Mills, Sue Hall, Bridget Macey, Monica Boggust, Jane Buxton and Tony Francis. Please contact David if you would like to become a Friend of the Museum, or Karen if you would like to volunteer to staff the front desk or join our cleaning team.

Jill Powell, Chair ☎ 742318

David Hall, Treasurer ☎ 743799

Karen Mills, Secretary ☎ 742155

Ashwell Village Museum Lottery

In its second year the Museum Lottery has continued to be a great success, raising vital funds towards the maintenance of the Museum in a year which has continued to be challenging. The lottery is on-going with quarterly draws at the end of March, June, September and December, with 50% of ticket money donated to the Museum. During the second year of operation the Museum Lottery has raised a fantastic £3,087 and, of course, the same amount has been distributed as prizes. None of the money from ticket sales has been used for administration or expenses.

December 2020	March 2021
1st F Moynihan	1st J Humphries
2nd C Leedham	2nd P Rose
3rd J Banham	3rd S Wardrop

June 2021	September 2021
1st O Holmes	1st P Rose
2nd I Stewart	2nd J Downie
3rd R Sheldrick	3rd D Wallace

The Museum Lottery has made a vital contribution to the upkeep of the Museum and the Trustees extend their gratitude to those who have taken part.

Join the Lottery now to help ensure the future of the Museum and your chance to win one of the quarterly prizes. It costs £25 per quarter – the same as a weekly National Lottery ticket – but our odds are just 70:1. For an entry form, please contact me:

Shirley Wardrop ☎ 742861

✉ ashwellvillagemuseum@gmail.com

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www.ashwell.gov.uk

Greening Ashwell

Greening Ashwell is a village group which meets monthly to undertake gardening projects within the village area, including wildflower seeding and tree and hedge planting. Our aim is to do our bit for climate change whilst consulting and liaising with our community.

Volunteers, of all ages and levels of experience, are always welcome. Please contact one of us if you would like to join us or find out more.

Fionnuala George ✉ f.george847@btinternet.com

Clare Docking ✉ Clarecdocking@gmail.com

Sherran Chalkley ✉ sherranmandrell@hotmail.com

Ashwell Archaeology

2021 was another quiet year in terms of activities for Ashwell Archaeology. For much of the start of the year the Museum was upended as a leak in the storeroom roof meant that every item in the store had to come out and some needed drying and cleaning. It was an opportunity to look again at the display space and the archaeological artefacts in store. When the Museum opened to the public in July, we had the first dedicated archaeology display case with finds from the earliest residents of Ashwell through to the Middle Ages. We were also able to display a small case of finds made when the Museum was first opened in 1930. At the time of writing, we are still finalising the labelling and creating a new wall display celebrating our Roman goddess, Senuna.

It is becoming clear that Ashwell in the Romano-British period was full of interesting shrines, and these were scattered across the whole village and the fields around.

With any luck we can begin some more targeted fieldwork in 2022. Thanks must go to my patient and helpful team of finds processors (we will do more soon!) and we give grateful thanks for the work of the late Martin Lush, who always had interesting questions to ask and wisdom to impart.

Sarah Talks

✉ sarah@sarahtalks.me

Your Village Needs You - Get Involved!

If you would like to get involved in community activities the contact details for the organisations in the above section of the Ashwell Yearbook might be a good place to start. But there are many other ways in which your help would also be invaluable to the village, such as the following, for example:

Parish Council working parties, e.g. at the Springs (see p. 9)

Youth Organisations (pp. 47- 49)

Charities (pp. 51 – 55)

Ashwell Quarry Nature Reserve (p. 51)

Church fund-raising,

e.g. the Flea Market, Book Swap or Christmas Fair (pp. 93, 21 and 93)

Sunday Afternoon Teas (p. 22)

Church Tower Restoration (p. 77)

Ashwell Music Festival (p. 87)

Ashwell at Home, the village open day (p. 90)

Ashwell Show (p. 92)

Being a volunteer driver for Royston & District Community Transport (p. 124)



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EDUCATION



Ashwell Primary School



Ashwell Primary School continues to be extremely popular, with only a few spaces available in some of our year groups. The school currently has 222 children on roll from Nursery (ages 3-4) through to Year 6 (ages 10-11).

The year 2021 continued to see us managing the school under exceptionally challenging circumstances as the world continues to battle the Coronavirus pandemic. Ever-changing guidance from the Department for Education meant that in January we again went into lockdown and had to close the school to most children. Unlike the first time around, we were prepared and quickly able to put our full remote learning offer into action. As per the Government's guidance, we were able to offer places to children of key workers and to vulnerable children and this saw approximately 38% of our children attending school in small groups. This was a particularly challenging time for us as a school community as we became unavoidably divided.



PCSO Nursery Visit.

It was a real relief when we were able to open our doors again to all children on Monday 8th March. Despite having to put in place a huge number of protective measures, staggered starts and collection times, working in bubbles with split breaks and lunches became the new normal, which we were forced to live with for the rest of the academic year. This prevented us from being together as a school in the normal way. The restrictions reduced the curriculum enrichment that we could offer our children. This moment marked the start of a new journey for us: the journey of 'recovery', a recovery that meant we needed to support children's mental health and wellbeing, as well as academic recovery.

The summer term of 2021 gradually saw the situation improve nationally, and slowly we were able to begin to dream of hosting some of our usual events, albeit in a very different way! We were delighted when we were able to host split sports days, keeping children in their bubbles and welcoming some parents back on to the school site.



Sports Day July 21st.

One of our greatest achievements in the summer of 2021 was the fact that, despite the continuing restrictions, we were able to put on three residential visits. Year 4 returned to Celtic Harmony camp for a one night stay in the round houses. Year 5 returned to Burwell House for two nights, and our Year 6 children were able to spend a long weekend away at Culmington Manor activity centre. The school year concluded with our Year 6 leavers being able to put on a production, aptly titled 'Wow – What a Year!' We were also able to host a whole-school assembly outside on the meadow to be able to say goodbye to Mrs Young, who left us to begin her well deserved retirement.



Year 6 Production - Wow What a Year.



The school has again been exceptionally fortunate to continue to be supported by grants from the Henry Colbron Trust. During the 2020-21 academic year a grant supported the school with some of the internal building work that created two purpose-built group intervention rooms. This has enabled us to provide additional, targeted group work for those most affected by school closures during the pandemic. We have also recently found out that a funding bid has been accepted that will allow us to add capacity and improve our technology within the school by purchasing the following:

- Replacement and upgrade of all classroom Interactive White Boards
- 30 x Chromebooks & charging trolley
- 10 x Multi-use classroom laptops

In addition to this, they have funded replacement maintenance-free fencing for around our pond area and work to create the new school transport drop-off and collection zone at the top of the meadow.

The start of the 2021-22 academic year enabled us to return to some form of normality in school. It was extremely emotional watching our children come together to play again during the first break time when they were all reunited on the meadow!

I used the following paragraphs in last year's Yearbook but reading back through them, I felt that they expressed exactly how I continue to feel after this year.

I cannot find the words to share with you how incredibly proud I have been of our whole school community during this difficult time. I applaud my staff for their hard work, dedication, commitment and enthusiasm.

They are an amazing team and we are all incredibly lucky to have them working for our children and families. I must also praise how well our children have coped with the difficulties that they have experienced this year.

Despite the difficult times, I can honestly say I've never been prouder of our school, my colleagues and our profession. I am so proud of the children and parents who have learnt in whatever way they can at home. I am so proud of our key workers, but also their children who continued to come to school without their friends but came in smiling every day.





2021 Highlights

January – School closed to most pupils as further lockdown was enforced – Remote Learning began. School provided Key Worker childcare provision during the COVID-19 pandemic.

February – School continued to provide Key Worker childcare provision during the COVID-19 pandemic.

March – School re-opened to all pupils. World Book Day events, Science Week.

June – Year 4 Celtic Harmony Camp, Year 5 Burwell House visit.

July – Year 6 Culmington Manor visit, COVID-19 Sports Day events in bubbles. Year 6 Production.

September – School fully re-opened to all year groups. Parents had the opportunity to attend our 'Meet the Teacher' evening in person. Year 5 Class assembly.

October – Year 5 visit to Burwell House. Year 5 & 6 visit from the Young Shakespeare Company. Whole school Art Day. Return of our Harvest Festival in Church. School football team competed in the Rural Schools' Football Tournament.

November – Year 6 class assembly; we celebrated anti-bullying week and Children in Need; PTA 'Who's that guy' event took place and the return of our PTA Fireworks event.

December – Return of our Christmas Bazaar. Widdershins theatre production; Christmas Lunch.

I would like to thank everyone in the community for their continued support. It is a real privilege to be the headteacher of this fantastic village school. I look forward to ensuring that the school continues to play a central part in the life of the village in the months and years to come.

Simon England, Headteacher

School Contact Details

📍 Ashwell Primary School, Silver Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire. SG7 5QL

Headteacher: Mr Simon England
School Office: Mrs Tracy Bowen

☎ 742297

✉ admin@ashwell.herts.sch.uk

✉ PTA: ashwellpta@gmail.com

Ashwell School Parent Teacher Association

The main aim of the PTA is to bring together parents and teachers with a common goal of fund-raising for much needed additional funds which will provide extra materials, equipment and facilities to enrich the education of Ashwell's children. We provide a link between parents and the school, and an opportunity for parents to become more actively involved.

Fund-raising in 2021 was a continuation of 2020 because we were unable to hold many fund-raising events owing to Covid restrictions. However, we have kept our second-hand uniform shop online so parents could buy second-hand uniform when required. This has now returned to being held at school.

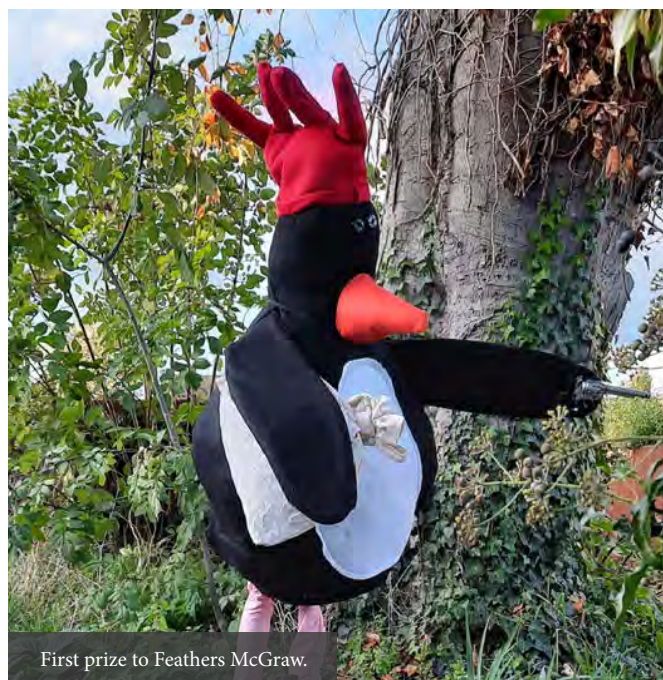
We were able to hold Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day shops in the school, slightly differently from in previous years, but I think the children still enjoyed being able to get a gift for their mums and dads.

We had planned to do an Easter Bingo for the children but owing to the restrictions the PTA were unable to hold this event in the school. Instead, Mr England stepped up as bingo caller over Zoom, putting it on for the whole school to enjoy on the days running up to the Easter break - don't know who enjoyed it more, Mr England or the children!

Then in September, with life returning slightly more to normal, we started with a car boot and yard sale. We had a good number of stalls around the village. We are hoping to hold another car boot sale for Ashwell at Home in 2022.

The fireworks display was back with a bang in 2021. We had a complete sell out of tickets. It was amazing to have 500 people all together, enjoying an amazing display put on by Tony Dean, Duncan Wardrop and Paul Terry, so a big thank you to them for another great display!

After the success of last year's "Who's that Guy?" we decided we would do this again. We had 16 great guys displayed around the village. It was lovely to see everyone hard at work in creating amazing guys. 1st Prize went to Feathers McGraw and a very close second prize went to Audrey II, so well done to you both. This was so much fun, and it was lovely to see so many families and villagers walking around Ashwell in search of the guys.



First prize to Feathers McGraw.

We also had a team of runners at the 10-miler Bass Belle in November, which was a great fund-raiser, so thanks to everyone involved.

We'd like to thank all the parents and others who spare time to volunteer or who support our events. Without you, we wouldn't be able to raise the money the school needs.



Second prize to Audrey II.

Yvonne Wright, Chair ✉ ashwellpta@gmail.com



PTA yard sale - Amy Moss.

Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group

Needless to say, Covid restrictions kept the Ashwell Baby and Toddler Groups closed during the first part of 2021. However, we were absolutely delighted to feel ready and able to open Messy Play sessions again from 15th April 2021, with full Covid safety measures in place, and with the support of the Elders at the United Reformed Church (URC), whom we thank very much.

It was extremely touching to see little ones encountering one another face-to-face in a play setting for what was the first time in their young lives in very many instances. The relief on many parents' and carers' faces too, to have access to a suitable venue to help entertain their young charges was also clear. The weather was kind to us all term, allowing for expansion into the outside space between the church and the hall, which helped to ensure appropriate social distancing and which also allowed a singsong to resume at the end of sessions! Given the circumstances, and to be sure that toys were properly sanitised and air dried between sessions, we elected to hold just one session per week throughout the Summer and Autumn terms of 2021.

Huge thanks are due to Karen Hipgrave who stepped down from running the Messy Play sessions at the end of term in July 2021, after being a consistent presence over three years. Grateful thanks must go to the new Treasurer of the group, Abby Vallely, who has run the sessions during the Autumn term while on maternity leave with her young daughter Alice. The additional support of local nannies and other parents and carers, who have lent willing hands washing up and tidying away toys at packing up time has also been very much appreciated, and has kept the group running.

It goes without saying that volunteers in any capacity are always welcome at sessions, and additional help to keep the sessions running each week will be needed in 2022.

The ethos of the groups remains to provide a warm and welcoming coffee morning and safe play space, where Mums, Dads, Nannies, Grannies, Grandads and any other carers can relax a bit and have a brief sit down with a cuppa (now guaranteed to stay hot!) whilst the little ones enjoy a play in some like-minded company.

Messy Play: Thursdays (term time only) 9:45-11:15 am.
URC Hall, £2.00

The group is noisy and messy, and allows for pre-schoolers to socialise, to let off steam and literally get messy! We have lots of toys and play-doh, paints, glitter, sticking crafts, safe oatmeal/pasta/noodles for messier creative play, as well as sand and water tables. At different sessions we offer painting, crafts, biscuit decorating, musical instruments, and run themed sessions at Easter and in the Christmas terms. There is always a quiet corner, soft mats and age appropriate toys for the very small babies who are very welcome at these sessions too.

Merry Pertwee, Treasurer, Ashwell Preschool

Abby Vallely, Treasurer, Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group

✉ mrsavallely@gmail.com

For more details please also see our Facebook site:
facebook.com/ashwellbabytoddlergroup

Ashwell Preschool



Ashwell Preschool (formerly known as Ashwell Playgroup) has been operating in the village since 1975 and is currently based at the Village Hall. We are a charity governed by Ofsted, run by fully qualified Early Years Educators, with a curriculum which covers the seven key areas of early learning.

In January 2021 the Government announced their latest Covid measures, instructing that preschool education settings were to remain open, whilst primary and secondary children (other than children of key workers) were to continue with home learning. On the one hand, we were delighted to be able to welcome our children back to the setting for business as usual after Christmas, with all our Covid safety measures in place, and to continue with their key development. On the other hand, the unsurprisingly reduced intake of children meant that our income stream was hard hit. Undaunted, our team of fund-raisers set up and managed a virtual fun run in March (thank you Laura!), and a socially distanced village treasure hunt in June (special thanks to Karen!), which between them raised £1,000.

In May 2021 we underwent an Ofsted inspection and received a GOOD rating, of which we are very proud. This inspection is always daunting for staff but with the addition of Covid measures in place there was an additional layer of stress placed on staff, who all dealt with the inspection perfectly. The inspector commented on our happy children, socialising well with their peers and enjoying a wide range of activities. Huge thanks must go to Preschool Leader Andrea McGowan Wood for her preparation for this day. Our setting remained open throughout the Spring and Summer terms, and the class of 2021 were able to “graduate” in July with a small party in the setting, with a small number of parents attending in the fresh air of the garden space at the Village Hall.

In 2021 we were lucky recipients of a Tesco’s community grant, for our project to replace the Village Hall garden surface during the

summer holiday break of 2021. This work required some significant preparation work prior to the new surface being laid, all of which needed to be on a voluntary basis to make the project affordable (see Ashwell Projects on page 65 for full details). In summary, with a lot of village support, sheer muscle power and sweat, we got this done over seven weeks and were able to re-open for the first day of term in September 2021 with a beautiful, new safety play surface installed throughout the village hall garden.

From September 2021 we have been able to offer a family support grant to a village family to allow attendance at Preschool, and are very grateful to the HCT for continuing to fund this scheme. We have had a smooth Autumn term, with the new addition of afternoon sessions (11.50am- 2.45pm) proving very popular with the 2021 leavers, whom now attend the Nursery class each morning at the village school, before walking down to Preschool at lunchtimes. Our fundraisers hosted Bingo Boogie at the village hall in mid-November and great fun was had by all. A Christmas Carol walk through the village ended the year in festive style.

Planned fundraising events for 2022 include a Quiz, and the return in April of the much-loved village Duck race, Covid permitting, with more details to follow. We’ll also be providing refreshments at the Village Hall during Ashwell at Home on Sunday 8th May. Any offers of help, however big or small in helping out with and/or financially supporting these events would be greatly appreciated. The Preschool Committee are actively seeking additional Management Trustees so please do get in touch if you have time to spare and are interested in these rewarding behind the scenes roles.

Ashwell Preschool Committee and Staff are looking forward to another successful year in 2022, whatever challenges Covid may bring, and remain on hand as always to answer any queries you may have.

Merry Pertwee,

Treasurer and Trustee, Ashwell Preschool

✉ info@ashwellplaygroup.co.uk

📍 www.ashwellplaygroup.co.uk



Young Sheep Handlers Florence and Hugo Lee

Sandra and Tim Gawthrouph keep their sheep in a field next to our house in Green Lane.

A few months ago, Sandra and Tim asked my children, Florence and Hugo, aged 7 and 5, if they would like to train to be Young Handlers in the Gransden Show. Florence and Hugo's response was, "Wow, yes please. We would love to show one of your sheep!"

Training began three weeks prior to the big event and it all had to be fitted in after school and at the weekends. At first the lambs were not happy to be wearing halters but Florence and Hugo stayed calm and were very encouraging. After a few sessions the lambs seemed happier and the children in control. During each training session Sandra would chat about the breed of sheep and give interesting facts for the children to remember.

On the day of the show, Saturday 25th September 2021, Florence and Hugo were raring to go. Florence showed a ewe called Colette and Hugo had a lamb called Daisy. The children had learnt a lot of facts about their ewe and lamb and were able to answer the judge's questions confidently. While they were in the ring Florence and Hugo demonstrated excellent handling skills and enjoyed every minute.

The children were delighted when the results were announced. Florence was awarded 4th place and Hugo a Special Rosette.

Lou Lee





SPORT

Ashwell Academics Football Club



With a slow start to the season caused by the pandemic, it was fantastic to see our teams back on the pitches in the spring with a return to our Accies best! All our teams are flourishing - from the Under-14s right through to our new Under-6 age group. The importance of football and teamwork returning

to full swing is clear to see in the enjoyment and sportsmanship of players, coaches and supporters, both on and off the field.

This year it has been great to see the formation of a girls' team made up of Under-9s and 10s. They entered their first tournament in which they were undefeated and subsequently were invited to be Cambridge United's mascots by the head of youth development, which was a great day out. They have now entered the Hertfordshire Girls Partnership League, so if there are any year 4 or year 5 girls out there interested in playing football then please get in touch.



Ashwell Accies girls' team.

This year also brought the curtain down on the Under-18s; Del Trezise, their long serving coach, had this to say:

"The 'class of 2008' became the first Accies year group to make it all the way, with a core of local players being ever present through the 13 years! Despite some pandemic disruption, we were able to complete a hugely enjoyable last season, finishing a creditable 3rd in the Royston Crow Division 1 and narrowly losing to Fairlands Youth in The Rutter Cup semi-final. As in previous seasons, the team played a high standard of competitive and attractive football whilst maintaining a strong 'fair play' ethos.

A huge thanks must go to the whole squad for their commitment, AJ Cunningham for coaching through the early years, Nick Baxter and Rob Myerscough for coaching support, our kit sponsors Crumps the Butchers and the exemplary parental support group that helped make the journey such a pleasure. Weekends without Accies football will not be the same, but life long memories and friendships have certainly been made!"

The Accies would like to thank Del and everyone who has supported him and the team for all their efforts over the 13 years - great job!



The Accies Under 18 team by Andy Hayes.

Off the pitch, the effort goes on to improve facilities. With now over 150 children participating under the Accies banner, nine teams and just four pitches in the village, resources are stretched to the maximum. The few pitches that we do have are showing the strains of accommodating so much football, so if any kind landowners are reading this....my contact details are below!

We are also on the lookout for new recruits for the committee, a great way to participate in village life, make new friends and support our kids. If anyone is interested in a role, please get in touch to find out what is involved. Recruiting a new vice-chairman is our current goal.

As always, the club couldn't run without the fantastic support and help from the parents. Thank you to all who help out on match days or with training. I know it is massively appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you in 2022. Up The Accies!

Andy Hayes, Chairman

✉ chairman@ashwellacademics.com

📍 www.ashwellacademics.com

🐦 Twitter: @ashwellAccies



Image by Margaret Budgen.

Cricket Club



Cricket continues in Ashwell in our most delightful of settings. One of our end-of-season opponents in 2021 told me that they go to many beautiful grounds playing friendly cricket but ours is truly their number one favourite. Praise indeed.

2021 was a successful year in many ways for the Ashwell cricketers. Over 40 players played for the club, excluding our new juniors programme (see below). We stayed in the Cambridgeshire CA Junior Div 1 (South) which was the key objective, despite that survival depended on the results in the last game of the season, a game we fortunately won. Thirteen of us went on tour to Newcastle, our first tour in several years, and had a blast playing 10-over cricket, some pleasant golf and just half a pint of shandy each – honest! We also had massive support for The Big Bashwell, our T20 midweek cricket in late June and early July, with players from the age of eight through to sixty out there.

Statistically in the league Ian ‘Plummers’ Plumley scored most runs – 370 of them, and was almost immovable all season. He was pipped to the top of the batting averages by George Griffin who got an average of 47 and change (which is stellar by the way).

Honourable mention here to Hugh Carling, who got 93 against Great Chishill which was top score of the year, pipping George (92 not out v Linton).

Dominic Crossley took most wickets (13) and was unplayable in several matches. On tour, he even won the overall tournament bowling prize which, given we were playing against some rather superior opposition, is no mean feat.

Reg Redfern skippered the team in 2021 with his special brand of modesty and skill and remains such a key part of the club. Reg was third in the batting stats and second in bowling. Not bad at all.

This summer we launched a kids’ cricket camp for children in years 3-6. Using funding from the Henry Colbron Trust, the club purchased new equipment, hired qualified coaches and ran sessions free of charge for eight weeks. The camp was well attended, with some weeks seeing more than 30 boys and girls playing on the Rec. We plan to run the same event in 2022.


Richard Young has been chairman for three years but is handing over responsibility as of the AGM in 2022. The club wishes to thank Richard for his amazing service to the club as chairman, knowing as we do that he’ll still be involved if we can keep him off the golf course.

Bene’t Coldstream ☎ 742288 ✉ bcoldstream@yahoo.co.uk



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Cycling Club Ashwell recovering after a local cyclocross race (c) Scott Perry.



Cycle Club

It was another good year for cycling and Cycle Club Ashwell. The pandemic has created a surge in interest in the activity: promoting physical and mental well-being through a tough time, providing a social outlet while many other leisure opportunities were limited and many who now work from home have found exploring our local lanes and bridleways a great way to decompress. Member fitness levels have increased and many new members have joined the Club, especially local children and women.

Integral to the Club's success has been the Small Gains field in the village. The Club is allowed to use this area, along with the tennis club, by kind permission of the Schwick family. When many coaching programmes and regional and national cycle race events were being cancelled, owing to the complications brought on by Covid-19, Ashwell members have rallied to put on sessions and races that have 'saved the day'. Did you know that Ashwell holds national cycle racing events? You do now! In the cycling community, Ashwell is now a much respected and renowned location, with a Club that punches well above its modest size. Small Gains has been essential to members, young and old – and for many cyclists from all over the UK – to enjoy their sport

Want to find out more about what goes at Small Gains? Get in touch. The Club runs regular weekly coaching sessions there for children – all year round. In the spring and summer there are members learning and honing grass-track racing skills on Monday evenings, with an increasingly popular women-only session on Tuesday evenings.

All-inclusive racing events and programmes are dotted throughout the calendar. The Club has several spare bikes that new riders can loan out. All you need is enthusiasm to begin a journey to better fitness and well-being, while discovering a friendly, social scene where people can talk all day about bikes, tyre pressures, the Tour de France, nearby cafés and potholes!

The Club's interests cover all types of cycling: on-road, off-road, track cycling, time-trialling, cyclocross and more. All confidence levels are catered for, from support for members interested in national level racing, down to organising specific rides for newbies and beginners. The Club is very friendly and social, with its members coming from all over the locality and from all walks of life: farmers, police, firefighters, teachers, scientists, mechanics, vets, doctors, the Army, housewives and househusbands, students, photographers... Cycle Club Ashwell appeals to all!

Martin Lawless, Cycle Club Ashwell

☎ 07977 652 247 ✉ martin@ccashwell.com



Ashwell Tennis Club

Did you know that tennis is apparently one of the best sports for helping you to stay fit and healthy, by combining exercise and social activity, especially in later life? Whether you've always fancied playing more regularly or been inspired to take it up by Emma Raducanu, Ashwell Tennis Club is a great way to get involved.

Ashwell Tennis Club has two hard courts, off Ashwell Street at the eastern edge of the village. We aim to be an inclusive and friendly club and a hub for village social life. We run children's group training camps, adult social tennis and competitions, private coaching, inter-club competition and of course you can book a court and play with a friend.

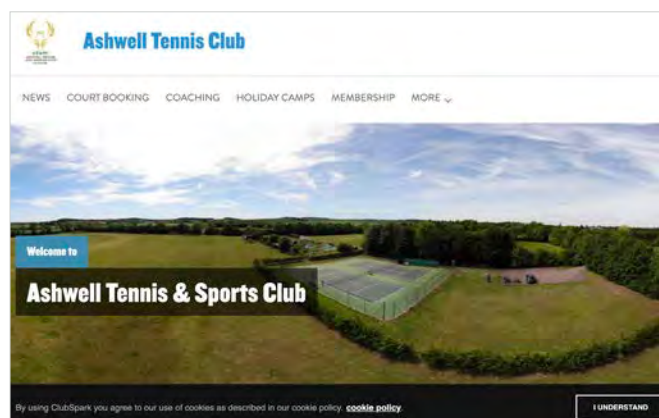
The past couple of years have been a challenge, but we have an increased membership and increased court usage. The social tennis on a Thursday night in summer, and a Friday morning and lunchtime in winter has brought out more regular players. Our coaches, Ben and Charlotte, have been teaching individuals and groups: the kids' groups sold out very quickly this year.

Our social program was rather limited, but we did manage to get a BBQ and tournament in during October: winners were newbies

Lisa and Mark in mixed doubles, and Harry and the ubiquitous Rich in the men's.

We are very excited to be planning on building a club house in 2022, and will be raising money through some community events throughout the year. If you're interested in joining, please look at the website:

www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/ashwelltennisclub



You can join directly from there, or contact the club by using the email below.

Jeremy Bates, Chair

✉ ashwellsport@gmail.com

ASHWELL LIFE



Our postman, Cliff Smith

Many of you will know Cliff. He is one of two postmen who, between them, deliver all our mail. They make a very good team. Cliff has been married for twenty-five years and has a teenaged son. He has worked in Ashwell for the past eight years and before that was a postman in Baldock, where he still lives, for sixteen years. He loves his job but says it is hard work.

His day starts in Baldock where he spends about three hours sorting mail and then he and Damian, the other postman, drive to Ashwell. Cliff makes all his deliveries on foot, which means he needs to be very fit. We've probably all seen him pounding along the pavement in his shorts.



Cliff Smith.

Cliff likes us, the people of Ashwell, and finds there is a good community spirit. Most people are friendly and know a lot of fellow villagers and this makes his job easier. He enjoys seeing local activities and events such as football on the Recreation Ground and the Advent Calendar displays as he delivers the post.

The most rewarding part of his job is that it can sometimes provide the opportunity to give significant help to those in need. For some elderly or housebound people, Cliff is the only person they see that day and he believes that it is very important to spend a few minutes with them. He also tells of being able, occasionally, to organise medical assistance for people too ill to do it for themselves.

In the past, he was able to spend more time with people and, for example, to share a pot of tea or change a light bulb. However, all such interaction has become very much more difficult in recent years as, with privatisation, the rules have changed and time constraints often make such interventions impossible.

Police Community Support Officer Chris Brabrooke

Chris lives in Lower Stondon with his wife and three children. He began his working life in a record/vinyl shop which closed as digital became dominant. However, he really wanted a community-based role and so applied for the new position of Police Community Support Officer which was based in Royston. He was successful. That was eighteen years ago and he is still serving our community and still enjoying his work.

The area for which he has responsibility covers the borders of Essex, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and includes the villages of Barley, Barkway, Weston, Clothall and others, as well as Ashwell, Bygrave and Hinxworth. Chris enjoys working with all these different communities and says it keeps his work interesting. Most of the area is very rural. Poaching and hare coursing are among the more common crimes. In the majority of the villages, including Ashwell, dwelling burglaries are rare but garden shed crime occurs more frequently.

Here in Ashwell he finds a sense of pride in the village and an enthusiasm to ensure that it continues to be a good place in which to live. He notes that a number of key people in the village are well informed and go out of their way to be helpful. Recently, we have had a particular problem with a significant increase in traffic, combined with a greater number of drivers who break the speed limit. Chris has worked with the school to inform children about this and is very pleased by the eye-catching posters which they produced and which many of us have seen.

He regularly patrols the village on foot and knows and likes many of us. He has also ridden with Ashwell Cycle Club.

He says that the most rewarding aspect of his job is that is very varied, giving him the freedom to be able to help people with their problems and issues and the opportunity to use his own initiative. Chris says, "It's one of the best positions in the Hertfordshire Constabulary, which is why I have stayed here so long."



Chris Brabrooke.

School Caretaker Andrew Warren

Andrew is the Caretaker at Ashwell Primary School. He was born in North Hertfordshire and met his wife at Norton School. They moved to Ashwell thirty years ago and their two children, a boy and a girl, grew up here and went to our school. In addition, his wife worked there for many years. Andrew has been Caretaker for the past three and a half years. He was previously a tanker driver for BOC and, prior to that, had his own motor cycle business. The position of Caretaker was a big change but Andrew says it has worked out very well for him, in spite of the many problems caused by Covid. To quote: "The school has kept us all sane. It's been open all the time."

When Andrew began working at the school he was impressed by the number of hours worked by the teachers and the other members of staff. He loves the atmosphere and says, "Everyone mucks in together. They all button down and get things done. They are a pleasure to work with."

His tasks are very varied and the hours would not suit everyone. He is in school by 6:15 am. Responsibilities include testing the emergency lighting and the fire alarm systems, dealing with outside contractors on site and checking the play equipment. He empties the recycling bins each day and that can take a long time because many of the children need plenty of support while they are still learning how to play their part in recycling. There are also seasonal challenges such as sweeping up fallen leaves and clearing snow. The latter can necessitate an even earlier start to Andrew's working day.

He must also be available to people who use the school out of hours, such as the PTA and the Guides. These are his routine tasks but the recent building work presented challenges for all at the school and it certainly made life more difficult for Andrew as the builders came in at week-ends and so he needed to be on site.

When asked about the best and worst parts of his job, Andrew couldn't think of anything he didn't like, though did say that he would sometimes appreciate more time to get things done. He thrives on the variety of tasks within each working day and says that the school is "such a relaxing place to work". The fact that it takes him just one minute to walk from home to school makes life even better.



Andrew Warren.



Jane Nicholson
Proprietor

Bradley's Hairdressers

Redken Appointed Salon

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YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

Ashwell Scout Group



2021 challenged 1st Ashwell Scout Group to find creative ways to help our young people discover new skills and fun experiences, while navigating the frequently-changing restrictions on group activities.

Scouts (age 10½-14) have enjoyed having as much time outdoors as possible. The highlight was when restrictions eased just in time for us to hold a summer camp, delivering the Expedition Challenge badge activity which we had to postpone last year. Scouts hiked 15 miles over two days, camping at Cottered and navigating their way home towards Ashwell. They did this in their patrols, seeing leaders at checkpoints and finding their way between them with map and compass. Camping together at Cottered allowed us to compare blisters, cook a massive and very tasty spaghetti Bolognese and sing a mix of traditional songs and pop hits round the campfire.

Cubs (age 8-10½) have been busy around Ashwell and further afield. Although we weren't able to meet face-to-face until April, we still kept in contact via Zoom, participating in quizzes, learning about navigation, and trying out some astronomy. We also managed a socially distanced treasure hunt around the village. Once restrictions had been relaxed, we could hold meetings on the Rec, where we practised erecting tents, even though we couldn't sleep in them, tried our hand at athletics and learned how to play Ultimate Frisbee. We had a day of activities in Bedfordshire, including archery, pedal karts and lasso throwing, and an evening at OTG assault course that ended with everyone getting very wet. Nine of our Sixers and Seconders have just returned from a district camp where they learned how to make rope, shot air rifles, lit fires and escaped from a puzzle room.

Beavers (age 6-7) have had another fun year. We had a day camp at Lesley Sale campsite in July. We have visited Baldock Fire Station where we got to climb their long ladders and use the hoses after looking around the fire engines. We have had lots of sessions at the Rec and the Springs as well as hikes around the village and a bonfire where we cooked marshmallows. Beavers also joined in the District 'Bangers and Bash' event at Wymondley Woods where we met all the Beavers from Letchworth and Baldock. We

are looking out for some new leaders if anyone has any spare time on a Tuesday evening!.

As a Group we enjoyed our family summer barbecue, a fun day on rafts and paddleboards at Grafham Water and we were pleased to participate in Ashwell's Remembrance Sunday observances.

All of this has been possible thanks to the fantastic enthusiasm of our Beaver, Cub and Scout leaders and the support of our executive committee. Scouting in Ashwell can only survive if we grow our team of leaders, so if you have ever thought of volunteering, now might be the time. You do not have to have a 'Scouty' background: anyone who enjoys crafts, water activities, camping, sports, the outdoors or simply helping young people enjoy being the best versions of themselves would be extremely welcome. You would be joining a great team of friendly leaders who provide excellent comradeship and support, so if you can spare an hour or two one evening most weeks during term time, please get in touch.

Stuart Kendrick, Group Scout Leader

✉ gsl@1stashwellscouts.org.uk

Ashwell Brownies



Last year at 1st Ashwell Brownies we have returned to face-to-face meetings. We spent the summer outside having lots and lots of fun on the Rec. We also worked towards our First Aid badge, with the help of

Mini First Aid in Hitchin. We managed to squeeze in an activity day at Wymondley Woods where we played games, built a bonfire and enjoyed toasted marshmallows.

The autumn term saw us head back inside for the first time in 18 months. The Brownies took part in an obstacle course at Fit4OCR, in Baldock. They also foraged for fruit and made their own crumble. At the time of writing, we have a jam-packed half term ahead of us which will see us finish off the year at the much-loved Christmas Carol Concert in St Mary's Church.

Ashwell Brownies is for girls aged 7-10. We meet on Tuesdays between 6:00 and 7:30 pm at the Village Hall - term time only.

Natalie Terry

✉ ashwellbrownies@gmail.com

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS



Ashwell Guides.

Ashwell Guides



2021 was an interesting and varied year, with a mixture of indoor, outdoor and Zoom meetings.

Summer term

Somehow, we managed to avoid the rain for all but one of our summer term meetings outdoors on the Rec!

We played wide-games, practised our knot-tying skills building catapults, completed one of the Guide First Aid badges, did the Thinking Day Peace badge and the Mixology badge that involved making 'mocktails', for which the Guides made up their own recipes... with interesting results!

One glorious summer evening we hiked to Baldock for fish and chips and, on another, did a 'Penny Hike' around Ashwell, learning some map and compass reading skills on the way. For those who've never done a penny hike, you first decide which way to head off and when you get to a junction decide which direction will be 'heads' and which is 'tails'. Flip the coin and that's the way you go, so you need to read the map to avoid getting lost.

Autumn term

Unfortunately, the skies clouded over as we walked up to Arbury Banks for our star gazing night but it was fun walking in the dark, so we're hoping to get a clear night in January to have another go.

Four of our Guides made up a Patrol for The Great Patrol Hunt, a competition to find the best patrol in Hertfordshire. They travelled to Boreham Wood for round one - competing against more than thirty other patrols from across Hertfordshire, completing tasks and challenges that also counted towards Badge awards. There are two more rounds, the last of which will be a weekend camp.

We were pleased to be able to participate in the Remembrance Day service this year; and at the Christmas Fair we had a stall selling bacon rolls to raise funds for Children in Need.

Our last meeting of 2021 was to Clip 'n' Climb indoor climbing at Cambridge, which was great fun and went by far too quickly. We plan to go again soon.

I hope you've enjoyed this glimpse of what 1st Ashwell Guides have been up to in the last year. Guides is for girls aged 10 – 14 years, so if you'd like to join us or find out more, or are interested in volunteering with us, please go to: [girlguiding.org](https://www.girlguiding.org), uk or contact me.

Sue Long, ☎ 01223 208337

There is a wide variety of activities for young people in Ashwell. Images by Stuart Kendrick, Group Scout Leader.



We are sorry to note that there are no reports from Ashwell Rainbows or the Asheteria Youth Club in this edition, which is chiefly because the difficult circumstances of the Covid pandemic made it impossible for them to function in 2021.



CHARITY GROUPS

Ashwell Mummers



Ashwell Mummers.

For the first time in 20 years, Ashwell Mummers weren't able to perform in 2021. Though the play didn't happen, we did produce a 2mins, 25secs video, including our song and a slideshow of photos of past performances (available on YouTube). We hoped that people would use this as an opportunity to donate to Helping Herts Homeless, the charity we have supported over the last 20 years, so that we could contribute as usual via our Christmas performance. Though it was difficult to separate our contribution from other donations, we have concluded that at least £100 was raised in this way, so thank you to all those who donated. If you'd like to see the video, the link is: <https://youtu.be/L99xI2VHZNM>

The 2022 (Christmas 2021) performance did not go ahead this year but we have considered what we should do, and felt that we may be able to perform a play later in the year. We hope we'll manage that! In the meantime, if anyone would like to donate to Helping Herts. Homeless, their donation page is: <http://helpinghertshomeless.org.uk/donate/>

For up-to-date information, follow us on our Facebook Group Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AshwellMummers/>

If you'd like to know more about Ashwell Mummers, or the various Mummers plays we perform, or if you would like us to perform at an event you are organising, please get in touch.

Ian Chandler ☎ 743091

Ashwell Quarry Nature Reserve



**Herts &
Middlesex**
Wildlife Trust

There was loads of growth in the reserve in 2021 and visitors would have felt that they really were wading through the long grass. But long grass that you can wade through is a rare commodity in our area, especially grassland with colourful flowers growing in it. The mice and voles must have enjoyed it - and the owls and kestrels probably enjoyed the mice and voles! Most of the long grass came to an end in August when it was cut and collected by the tractor but long areas were left where the tractor cannot cut - and some will be left until late winter before it is cut, so that insect larvae and other small things will have somewhere to spend the winter.

Along with large numbers of pink Pyramidal Orchid, we also had a single Common Spotted Orchid. This is the first one recorded in the reserve for decades, although it is a species that ought to be there. Orchids are very odd plants and rather choosy about where they grow.



We hope 2022 will be another good year. If you have a few hours to spare from time to time, why not come along and join in with some (mostly) gentle exercise?

Our work parties take place on the third Sunday of the month from 10:00 am until about lunch time. Please contact me beforehand, so that enough tools are brought along.

Don't forget that, although the nature reserve is private land, visitors are welcome there. A free permit lasts a year and allows you to go for a walk around at any time.

Chris James, 56 Back Street

☎ 742684 ✉ chrisjames56@btinternet.com



War Memorial Dedication Centenary.

The Royal British Legion



This year has been a year of two very different halves – the first with committee meetings but unfortunately no events, and the latter part which became quite busy.

As our VE day coffee morning needed to be cancelled (you know why!) we held a combined VE/ VJ day coffee morning in August. It is very difficult to describe the buzz, conversation and smiles. It was evident that so many were delighted to be out, to chat and to feel a bit of normality.

The Poppy collection is of course a nationally important event and our District organiser, Jo Huggins, began her preparation mid-year. At a later committee meeting we agreed where and how we would be collecting. In the end we had two contactless devices that we used during the collection period, one in a gazebo on Carter's Pond and the other outside the Pharmacy. It was interesting to hear differing reactions, ranging from "What is the world coming to?" to "I haven't any cash, thanks for this". As this was the first use of the machines, we were pleased that close to 10% of Ashwell collections were made in this way. Our District total of £3,800 includes collections in Hinxworth and Newnham and later we were able to add a further £800 from our fund-raising.

We held a Remembrance meal in the Bushel shortly after knowing the total collected. Vicki, Kieran and their team had decorated the School Room beautifully with flags and bunting, and they topped it off with good food and friendly prompt service. Thank you. We were pleased to welcome Martin Lutyens and his wife to the meal. Martin is a relative of Sir Edwin Lutyens, who designed the Ashwell War Memorial and many others.

Lastly, on 4th December it was 100 years since the Dedication of our Lutyens War Memorial. As you can see the wind was strong and Tony Lewis, our Standard Bearer, had his work cut out just to hold on to it. After the service we retired to the pavilion for tea and cake and crucially to warm up! Once again, it was a friendly occasion so that, along with our Remembrance meal and VE/ VJ coffee morning, we can look back rather more favourably on 2021 than the previous year. Thanks to many for the support they have given us.

Rev'd Canon Lindsay Dew, Chair

Andrew Gillborn, Vice-chair ☎ 742730

✉ andrew.gillborn@btopenworld.com

Membership enquiries ✉ secretary.trblashwell@gmail.com

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Charity Christmas Card Shop.

Ashwell Charity Christmas Card Shop

Once more, despite Coronavirus, the charity Christmas card shop opened its doors for Christmas 2021. Opening in 2020 had set us up well for a safe opening, so we opened in October and this year we were able to remain open throughout, with the same restrictions.

This year, a total of fifteen charities were represented and the shop was well supported in Ashwell and also by customers from surrounding villages. We usually have a small 'passing trade' as well, and this year was no exception. It's looking as if people very much feel the need to keep in touch, perhaps owing to the difficult times, and we have had a very good year financially, with sales of Christmas Cards totalling over £3,350, almost a 20% increase on last year (itself a very good year). Once again, we had a very wide choice of card designs, many unique to the shop, which proved very popular.

The card shop has been running for well over 20 years and, during that time, has become a part of Ashwell's village community. We are very grateful for all the support we receive from people in Ashwell and surrounding villages. Despite the restrictions, people have again been enormously supportive, even though we didn't function quite so well as a social hub (next year, we hope!). We did enable you to support good causes and, by sending the cards to your friends and family, continue to raise awareness about the work of the various charities.

As always, we would not be able to do this without the individuals who, on behalf of the charities, supplied the cards and gave their time to staffing the shop each weekend. At least this year we were able to provide tea and biscuits.

Liz and I are always pleased to welcome people to 'The Old Post Office' at the corner of Kirby Manor as a proper shop for a couple of months of the year. If you support a charity and would like to be involved next year, please 'phone Ian before September!

We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2022.

Ian Chandler ☎ 743091

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CHARITY GROUPS



Pictured: Dr Anna Santarsieri and Dr George Follows, Addenbrookes Hospital.

Ashwell's Fight Against Cancer



In the spring of 2021 AFAC was at last able to present a cheque to Mr Fellowes at Addenbrookes Hospital for £4,000.00 – this being money raised in 2019 for research into Lymphoma. He and a colleague sent us a lovely photograph thanking AFAC for the donation.

What a joy it was to be able to hold a fundraising activity in July after the difficulties we had all been experiencing. AFAC held a coffee morning, still with some restrictions in place, on what must have been the hottest week of the year. Coffee? Ice cream would have been more appropriate! As always, we received wonderful support, raising over £1,000.00. I think some people were actually happy to go out and spend some money.

In 2020 we managed to raise £900.00 through donations, so we had a head start for our nominated campaign: research and clinical care of pancreatic cancer. Could we raise even more? We were overwhelmed by the generosity of Ashwell residents with donations being popped through my letter box or handed to me when I was out and about. You know who you are and so a big Thank You to each and every one of you.

I was very touched when the West family requested any donations in memory of Ruth should go through AFAC. They asked that any such monies raised would be used for research and clinical care of cancer of the Upper GI Tract. I was only too happy to confirm that this would be done. The wonderful amount of £1,100.00 was raised and I was able to ensure this was deposited into the correct account at Addenbrookes for research into this cancer.

Our fundraising still continued for pancreatic cancer in the form of a Christmas Fayre and participation in the Christmas Fair held in St Mary's Church. Also, local artists Jill Powell, Jo Eggleton Rance and Christine Pickett allowed me once again to use their artwork on our Christmas cards and I must thank Eric and Audrey Gurney for sponsoring the printing costs.

At the time of writing, over £4,000.00 had been raised for Pancreatic cancer research, without counting Christmas card sales – brilliant! This means that, in the relatively short time AFAC has been operating, over £43,000.00 will have been donated to cancer research and clinical care of our chosen underfunded cancers. All thanks must go to the hardworking team and Ashwell people who have made this possible. 2022 Here We Come!

Christine Scholfield

☎ 742136

✉ Christinescholfield@hotmail.com



Diapalante



Ashwell started 2021 in lockdown and as I write it is anyone's guess how it will finish. In a difficult year for fundraising, a few of the planned events were able to go ahead: our garden party

in the summer and the Ashwell WI Afternoon Tea and Christmas Dinner, both of which we catered for as usual. We would like to thank everyone who has supported either these events or our online fundraising. This generosity has enabled Diapalante to continue our work helping hundreds (about 500) of people in Senegal, West Africa, as they strive to improve their circumstances and make their lives in Senegal more sustainable.

In contrast, 2021 in Senegal has seen no vaccinations and not too much interest in coronavirus. No-one knows how much coronavirus there is – it is no longer tested for, so you can neither have it nor die of it! But it seems that the heat and the outdoor lifestyle may have prevented a major epidemic.

The Diapalante Community Education Centre in Kaolack, one of Senegal's largest towns, has enjoyed another busy year. The Centre's courses reflect the requests for education received from

the local community. They help schoolchildren progress in school; adults and children whose education had ended prematurely gain the skills needed for work and life; and a new outreach helps talibés, the very poorest and most impoverished of children, to master arithmetic and to read and write in Wolof, their mother tongue.

Everyone is welcome at the Centre and a rich mix of people, from those hoping to get to university to those hoping to master reading a simple text, squeeze into its modest ground floor apartment. Though donations are welcome, there is no charge to attend but members are encouraged to share their skills. By training and volunteering as Leaders they both help other members and improve their own skillset, so this is a win-win situation for everyone.

These volunteers enable Diapalante to help so many beneficiaries with only three staff. Mamadou Kane is the Centre's charismatic founder, Nafi runs the library and Kaba takes responsibility for the computer room. They all teach and offer pastoral support. Nafi and Kaba aim to complete their formal training as community youth leaders in December 2021 but, as is often the case in Senegal, no final exam date has yet been set.

With thanks to all our supporters.

Liz Chandler

☎ 743091

WEDDINGS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Jessica Biddle and Oliver Killick (3rd July 2021)



Jessica Biddle and Oliver Killick moved to Ashwell in June 2019. Ashwell is close to Jessica's heart as her grandparents (Hayes and Barton) grew up and lived here. After being together for six years Ollie and Jess married on 3rd July 2021 in the secret gardens for a beautiful, rustic, woodland themed wedding at the Letchworth Centre for healthy living.

Covid had changed their plans to marry in 2020. After gaining an extra year of wedding planning, involving a lot of changes, Jessica decided to change her wedding dress too, just three weeks before the big day!

The bride walked down the aisle with her dad, Allen Barton. Despite a weather warning the day before, glorious sunshine shone throughout. It was the most magical day. After Ollie and Jess had waited so long to marry each other, and having not been able to see family and friends for so long, their wedding was a beautiful celebration for all, the first time everyone was able to get together in a very long time as restrictions had just been lifted.

Ollie and Jess honeymooned in Cornwall, where they had got engaged in 2018. In typical Cornwall style, the weather was wet although this didn't stop them exploring new areas of the county.

Vicky Breen and Kieran Day (30th October 2021)



Kieran and Vicki Day of the Bushel & Strike were finally married on a beautiful but chilly autumn day in the beautiful St Mary's Church, Ashwell on Saturday 30th October 2021. Vicki finally managed to wear the dress she had bought for the original wedding ceremony, which should have taken place in Ireland in August 2020. However, these plans were put on the back-burner owing to Covid restrictions.

The bridesmaids were the couple's daughters: Tia, Amie, Emily and Alana, who all looked gorgeous in their deep burgundy dresses; along with their son, Regan, who looked very handsome in his three-piece suit and matching burgundy handkerchief. The bridal party had a very short walk up Mill Street, where Kieran was waiting patiently in the church with his best man, Luke, who has been his friend for most of his adult life. The ceremony itself was beautiful. The choir was in full voice and the bells rang afterwards.

The reception was held back at the Bushel & Strike and the evening guests consisted of many locals who came to offer their well wishes and danced the night away with the fantastic local band, Joyrider. A perfect day and evening!

Jodie Marie Hyde and Max Jackson (16th October 2021)



Jodie Marie Hyde, daughter of Tracey and Michael Hyde from Great Amwell, and Maximilian James Jackson, son of Jasmin and Robert Jackson of Cheshunt, were married in St Mary's Church, Ashwell on Saturday, 16th October 2021. Jodie and Max met five years ago and had been engaged for eighteen months. Max proposed to Jodie by Ashwell Springs on Maundy Thursday in April 2020 and so marrying in St Mary's helped cement the place as special to them both.

The weather on the day itself was rather questionable in the morning, with rain, wind and grey skies, but luckily by the time people began arriving at the Church the sun had broken through and shone for the rest of the day. Jodie walked down the aisle alongside her father, with the bridal party consisting of sisters Emma and Natalie, as well as friend Danielle. They were met at the end of the aisle by Max and his best man, brother Kirk.

The reception was held in a restored barn at Coltsfoot Country Retreat, just outside Datchworth, Hertfordshire. Jodie and Max would like to thank the Rev'd Lindsay Dew for his help in the run-up to the day, along with both Rev'd Lindsay and Rev'd Chris Campbell for the service on the day, as well as the choir, organist, flower arrangers and bell ringers. It was a beautiful service and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The honeymoon was an initial week in the Italian Alps, followed by a longer, more relaxing break in the new year once travel restrictions had loosened.

WEDDINGS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Angela and Derek Hughes' Golden Wedding Anniversary



Angela and Derek were married in St Mary's Ashwell on 4th September 1971. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev'd Jack Catterick, which was followed by the reception at the Bulls Head in Baldock. Later that night they flew to Benidorm for their honeymoon. The flight was nicknamed the 'Honeymoon Special' as it was full of other newly-weds!

Angela and Derek first met at a local dance in Baldock. Derek moved from South Wales to Baldock in 1970 to work at Borg Warner. Angela grew up in Ashwell and was christened and confirmed in St Mary's. They went on to have two children, Laura and Gareth, who were brought up in the village and attended Ashwell School. Angela's parents also married at St Mary's in 1942.



An early Golden Wedding celebration with Laura, Mark, Gareth, Julie and grandchildren Rebekah, Matthew, Emily and Lucy was spent at Potters Resort, Hopton-on-Sea in August. Hopton had been a regular holiday destination for the family, along with Angela's parents, for many years. A good time was had by all, although Angela always insists that they go for a swim in the North Sea whatever the weather! The day of the Anniversary itself was spent together at home with family, followed by an evening meal out..

John and Rosemary Glover's Golden Wedding Anniversary



Rosemary (Rosie) and John Glover celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 20th March 2021. John and Rosemary met at Ashwell Youth Club when they were both teenagers.

Rosemary was only fifteen at the time and she was afraid to tell her parents about John; so much so that, when John bought her a box of chocolates, she hid them when she got home, to avoid being found out. After dating for three years, they married at St Mary's Church in Ashwell.



They lived happily in Ashwell, firstly at Sunnymead, moving to Silver Street and finally settling in Station Road. During their 50 years together they had two children, Mark and Carl and have two grandchildren.

John worked as an HGV driver before retiring in 2008. Before getting married, Rosie worked as a parachute stringer at the Ashwell factory of Irvin's of Letchworth, which later on became Cook's factory in Ashwell Street.

Dai and Sue Rowley Jones' Golden Wedding Anniversary



Sue and David (Dai to everyone but his mother and father) were married in August 1971 in St Mary Magdalene Church, Sheet, Hampshire. Their reception was in a family member's garden and, to illustrate how times have changed, they drove back to London and were sitting down to dinner at Robert Carrier's Restaurant in Islington by 8:30 pm.



They met at Guy's Hospital, London, when Sue was a staff nurse and Dai a lowly medical student. After some time working in London, they had two spells of living in Abergavenny and moved to Ashwell on April Fool's Day, 1977. Dai had started work at SmithKline & French in Welwyn Garden City and for the next 14 years also worked part-time in the Ashwell practice.

Two of their four children were born in Ashwell and they have eight grandchildren. Part of their golden wedding celebration was an 18-strong family holiday in Devon. They were also fortunate enough to entertain friends and family, courtesy of Martin and Lucy, both at the Arbury and, between showers, in their miniscule garden!

Stuart and Dorothy Greenbank's Diamond Wedding



Stuart Greenbank and Dorothy Binns met in West Yorkshire through their involvement in the running of a church youth group. After finally getting up the courage to ask if Dorothy if she would step out with him and then asking her father if he could propose (response: 'Aye, tha can, lad'), they married on 2nd September 1961. Their first son, Ashley, was born in 1963, after which another two boys were to follow in 1964 (Alistair) and 1968 (Kevin). Stuart's work as a metallurgist took the family to Oxfordshire, and then on to Birmingham, moving there to be founder members of a home-church network, which later went on to become Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church. The family settled first in Chelmsley Wood and then moved to Sutton Coldfield.



Stuart worked for Alcan until the end of the 1970s, and later moved to the bus and train maker, Metro Cammell, before changing careers and moving into teaching maths, finally ending his working life as a teacher in a special school. Throughout all their years in Birmingham Dorothy balanced bringing up the boys with working for the National Children's Homes organisation. After retiring they left Birmingham, with the children working around the country, and moved to Ashwell (via the village of Austrey), where they have enjoyed village life and the proximity of their grandchildren for the last fifteen years. Their 60th anniversary was celebrated quietly in the company of their extended family.

Martin and Carolyn Lush's Diamond Wedding



Martin and Carolyn Lush celebrated their Diamond Wedding on 3rd June 2021 in Ashwell. They met when Martin left his Ealing home to study agriculture at Shuttleworth College, Old Warden, in the late 1950s. Carolyn was a member of Biggleswade Young Farmers' Club (working at Lloyds Bank as a cashier). Several Shuttleworth students, Martin among them, joined the Club – presumably so that they could meet with the local girls!

They married in St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, on 3rd June 1961. After a year or two, back problems meant that Martin could no longer do physical farm work, so he decided to study for a teaching certificate at Wolverhampton. By this time, they had two small children, Andrew and Jenny. Carolyn went back to live with her mother in Biggleswade, plus the children and family dog, while Martin studied.



In 1966 Martin applied for a job lecturing on sheep at Lincolnshire College of Agriculture and the family lived in three different houses in the area over time. He stayed at the College, but with several different appointments over the years. On retirement in 1999, Martin and Carolyn decided to move nearer their daughter Jenny and family at Hitchin. As soon as they looked at Ashwell they fell in love with the village and looked for a suitable house here.

Their son, Andrew, now lives in Canada, together with his family and new addition, little Alex, his daughter's little boy. Celebrations of the Diamond anniversary included a big family party in Hitchin and, on the day, their two bridesmaids visited for the day. They went out to The Bushel & Strike for lunch.

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ASHWELL PROJECTS



Historical Herb Bed - An update

The Historical Herb Bed in Alms Lane, which began in early summer 2020, has had a slightly up and down time over 2021. As with many creative projects, the continuation of the Covid situation into the spring of 2021 caused some problems. On the plus side the herbs grew well, a splendid new bay tree was planted, beautiful artwork by Jo Eggleton Rance was created for the information boards, more painted pebbles arrived, and the border was alive with bees and other insects.

On the downside, various issues in the groups looking after the area has held up the printing and installation of the information boards; the weeds grew very well and then the hazel tree to one side of the larger bed was cut down and the logs piled onto the bed to the left, damaging the bay tree in the process. Looking positively to the future though, we have plans to create some bug hotels with the hazel logs, the hazel will probably sprout again and the formal opening of the herb beds, with the information boards in place, will be at Ashwell at Home on Sunday 8th May. The Ashwell at Home theme of 'Health and Well-being' fits beautifully with the healing and restorative powers of herbs, gardening and providing resources for wildlife.

If you would like to be involved in helping this project to grow and develop, please get in touch.

Sarah Talks ✉ sarah@sarahtalks.me

Improving Biodiversity in St Mary's

Partly prompted by Greening Ashwell's hopes for improving biodiversity throughout the village, and partly in response to our Diocese's project 'Living Churchyards', a small group has been working on the area of the Churchyard that runs along Hodwell. A hedge was planted along this boundary about ten years ago and the grass has been allowed to grow longer among the graves here.

This vigorous grass is now an issue as it prevents other wild plant species from growing. The grass has been regularly strimmed in 2021 and the cuttings raked up to reduce nutrients getting to the soil. Chris James was very helpful, loaning equipment from the quarry group. Yellow rattle seedlings have been planted and more wildflower seeds were scattered in the autumn. Gradually these native plants should make a difference. Longer term, the plan is to create cut paths through this area as we are aware that family graves are tended here.

Raking, strimming and watering the seedlings is hard work and we are grateful to all those who have helped. Youth and experience made a great team.

Sarah Talks

✉ Sarah@sarahtalks.me



Bill Sargent pargetting.

Pargetting at Foresters Cottages

We can thank Henry VIII for the very first of pargetting in England. This kind of decorative relief work, carried out in lime plaster, was originally introduced in 1543 to allow Henry to go one better than his French counterpart's newly built palace at Chambord. Henry arranged for an Italian team of craftsmen to complete elaborate plasterwork for Nonsuch Palace. Although the palace eventually became a casualty of the Duchess of Cleveland's gambling habits, pargetting thankfully flourished.

Pargetting found a natural home in East Anglia, where a lack of stone for building material meant lime plaster was the most convenient way of keeping out the cold. These days the pargetting tradition is mostly championed by one man, Bill Sargent, whose Pargetting Company has carried on the tradition since 1929. Lime plastering companies have increased in recent years to around 50 and the number of pargetters has also increased - to FOUR.

Pargetting is on the Red List of Endangered Crafts. It is certainly a low-tech affair. Bill often uses a teaspoon to make a lot of the hand-crafted designs and he makes it a rule to use only tools available in Jacobean times, keeping his designs appropriate for that era of history. All the pargetting is freehand and Bill likes to think his work reflects the personalities of the homeowners!

The owners of numbers 2 & 3 Foresters Cottages had an oak tree pargetting design added to the gable end of number 2

in 2014 and decided to extend the design in 2021 when they acquired number 3 and conjoined the two properties.

The new design is a squirrel and acorn on the gable end of number 3 and they have also added boxing hares over the fireplace inside the cottages, as well as a pear tree in the entry way. The pargetting is naïve in nature, to be appropriate for the original build date of the properties; and the designs were conceived by Jack Quense, Architect - who owns the properties along with his wife,

Jo Auckland





Ashwell Village Hall Garden Project

During the Ashwell Village Hall AGM in the spring of 2021 a proposal was presented to replace the very old and perished artificial grass surface in the Village Hall garden, used primarily by Ashwell Pre-school. A plan was agreed between the Pre-school and Village Hall Trustees to combine this work with undertaking repairs and much needed alterations and additions to the drainage system within the garden and alongside the Village Hall wall, in order to prevent any recurrence of flooding in the Hall corridor and under the stage. Quotes for a safety play surface were obtained, and advice sought from NHDC planning department regarding permissions required for the work.

Momentum for the project gathered and work began on 23rd July as soon as the Pre-school term ended, with the dismantling and removal of existing toys and the arrival of skips (grateful thanks to Newnham Eco-waste Ltd for providing us with a discounted rate). The first job was to lift and dispose of the existing perished surface. During this work, various drainage chambers were identified and their relevant connections investigated and established. At this stage a buildings surveyor provided useful information regarding the optimal drainage requirements on site, considering the porous nature of the new EPDM play surface to be laid (Play Source Ltd), as well as the variable, sloping nature of the garden, both towards the car park and towards the Hall wall.

The next steps were to dig out approximately 150mm of the under layer of old hardcore, sand and a high percentage of bits

of builder's rubble, over the approximately 110 m² area, whilst alongside this work Village Hall Trustee Alan Munns investigated the existing drainage layout and developed a robust plan for the additional drainage required. A narrow concrete perimeter was identified and exposed, running along the length of the boundary wall of the garden during this work, although its possible use back in the days when the Village Hall complex was a working brewery is a mystery!

The big dig was carried out entirely by hand, given the presence of multiple drainage chambers within the narrow site, and the close proximity of the boundary wall, which needs some repair. A call-out on the Ashwell Hub for volunteers produced many willing hands who gave many weekday hours, plus arriving en masse each Saturday morning throughout the summer holidays, fitting this hard graft in around their own jobs and family commitments.

New, covered slot drains were laid along the entire length of the hall wall, and connected to a soakaway within the car park. This sounds simple, but took skill and a lot of mental sweat to lay these in a straight orientation across three doorways, given the changes in level across the slopes involved. Mick Huggins gave up time and expertise to lay a brick step at the central entrance into the Hall, which allowed for the new surface to be laid at much less of a slope towards the Hall, and again minimise the risk of future flooding within the Hall.

ASHWELL PROJECTS

Twenty-six tonnes of Type 1 hardcore arrived by articulated lorry and was duly moved by trailer into the Village Hall car park by the Farrows Farm team over the bank holiday weekend. Given the clash of our timing with the harvest, this was a very kind and much appreciated essential bit of help, which allowed us to order the aggregate in bulk, rather than suffer the significantly greater cost of delivery to site of multiple 1 tonne bags from any of the well-known DIY suppliers... And finally, also over the bank holiday weekend, yet more volunteers arrived with barrows and shovels, to shift this hardcore into the garden, ready for the Play Source company to lay the EPDM surface, just in time for the start of the new term on 6th September - Phew!

I would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU from everyone at Ashwell Pre-school to all the following, for joining in with this venture and making a success of this worthwhile project. The smiling faces of children playing in what is now a safer and cleaner garden make it all worthwhile!

Guy Reed for hours of help and for recruiting the Ashwell Fit Club into this effort, and to Zack Reed, Rich Kean, Hendrik Dau, Ed and Alice Sparkes, Ian Hale, Tom Kemp, Claire Bonfield, Thomas and Robyn, Izzy Herring, Alison and Bethie, Adam Lythgoe, the McGowan Wood family, Sam Wallace and the Farrows Farm team, Rosemary and Mike Pearch, Alan Munns and finally to my husband, Piers Pertwee.

Merry Pertwee

Mapping Ashwell

The Ordnance Survey has agreed to allow organisations in the public sector to access, use and share its data. Ashwell Parish Council has registered under this agreement and has obtained digitised maps of the local area.

This presents two challenges: what would we use these maps for, and how can we work with them to overlay our own information? It turns out that the second question is easier to deal with.

There is a lot of software out there that can be used to make maps. The free, open-source software QGIS was particularly appealing because, well, it's free. It was easy to download and install. There is a bit of a learning curve to climb and on the wayup it's clear that an enormous amount is possible if you are prepared to exploit its features fully.

The map showing the new village settlement boundary and listed buildings is a fairly simple demonstration. It is made up of three layers: the underlying Ordnance Survey Map, a collection of shapes overlaying the listed buildings, and finally a shape whose outline follows the settlement boundary. That's basically it.

Working out what to do with this resource is trickier. It's not just capable of identifying features of interest but the software can store data about them and perform complex calculations (e.g. "How many listed buildings are within 100 metres of my house?").

The first project for the Parish Council is to map its physical assets. As they say, "Don't imagine that anything you don't understand is easy..." It all seemed fairly straightforward at first. The aim was to have an accurate register of Parish assets in order to work out sensible maintenance and replacement schedules.

Surely it was simply a matter of recording the location of all the street furniture, playground equipment and Parish owned land? But to be able to prepare a maintenance schedule we first need to find out the current physical condition. For street furniture, the type of construction and materials used could also be important to help with appropriate future maintenance.

At the time of writing there's still much to learn about the software before we can include all the information we want, to make full use of its capabilities. But we're optimistic we'll master it eventually!

If you have an idea for a mapping project that might benefit the village, please do get in touch and share your thoughts.

Norton Mahy ✉ norton.mahy@ashwell.gov.uk

Graham Lee ✉ graham.lee@ashwell.gov.uk



Ashwell listed buildings shown in red. Detail from a larger map.



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ASHWELL PROJECTS

Ashwell Primary School Art Day Projects

These Are the Hands

During the summer term in May 2021, Ashwell School pupils celebrated an art day, held across the whole school. The day was motivated by Michael Rosen's poem celebrating people in the NHS front line: 'These Are the Hands.'

Pupils enjoyed practising fine drawing techniques, painting, collage and making clay pinch pots. Watching art being created by foot and mouth painters as part of this project, was inspirational.

Walls

In the autumn term, during October, we celebrated our second art day, on the theme of 'Walls.' In part, this work was linked to our curriculum studies linked to Black History Month. Other sub-themes included: historical wall art, wall art for mindfulness and wall art for expression - all leading to a variety of mixed media studies.

Emelie Allworth





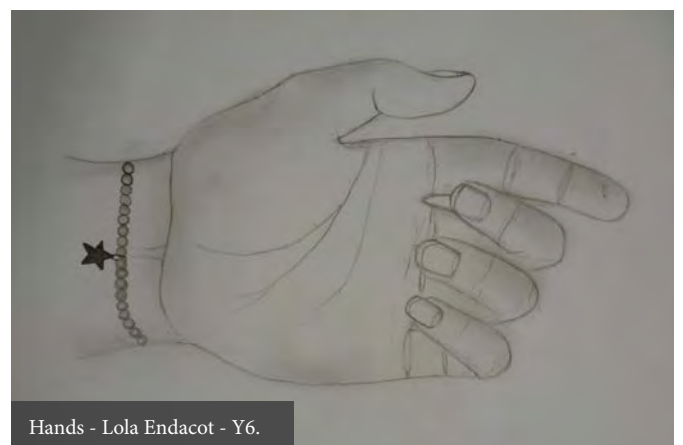
Hands - Nursery Class.



Walls - Chalk and foil wall art - Y2-4.



Greek Pottery - Y6.



Hands - Lola Endacot - Y6.



CLUBS AND SOCIETIES



Ashwell Theatre Club

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's the value of social interaction – being able to talk, share, laugh, sing and, yes, entertain. Although this was not anything like a normal year, we were able to tap into the creativity of our members through our two productions. *Hallowindows*, masterminded by Sally Fletcher, happened in October 2020 and *Murder at the Springs*, written by Christine Schwick took place in May 2021. (Please see pages 88 and 89 for a full report on *Murder at the Springs*.) Both efforts were carefully produced with Covid safety in mind, so they were held outside, socially distanced and with minimal rehearsals. The pandemic forced us to think differently. We realised we could use our beautiful village as a set, and we could 'think outside the box.'

Looking forward, we want to find a way to welcome different kinds of members, embrace a diverse array of activities and productions, to build on our time of 'thinking outside the box' and to tap into the native creativity that seems to be in the water of Ashwell, for the benefit of all. To this end, we have created a calendar that spans to 2023 where we have pencilled in a variety of activities such as trips to see a production, one act plays, an outdoor event and a pub night, as well as the old favourites such as the summer picnic and the Panto. By having a diverse array of opportunities, we hope to satisfy the increasingly diverse needs of our membership and to welcome new members every year.

Our goal is to plan better to enable it all to happen. Rather than waiting until after a production has ended to think about the next one, the committee has carefully created a calendar of events that looks forward a full 18 months from now, all listed on our website.

Some are tentative and moveable, some are fixed, but having a roadmap allows everyone to know where we are headed and allows us to take control of our future. It allows members to plan and we hope it will increase participation in all events. The committee is here to provide a foundation upon which our members, new and old, can build.

Would you be happy to arrange a trip? Do you have an idea for a play you would like to direct? Are you interested in acting or helping behind the scenes? We need and want many helping hands to make this happen. Our doors are flung open and we want to create a welcoming place that will enable your creativity to shine. It's got to be a team effort.

Thank you again to everyone who has supported us thus far, and I look forward to seeing what creative and exciting things we can do together next year and beyond.

Diane Jacoutot, Chairman

✉ ashwelltheatre@gmail.com

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES



WI members enjoying afternoon tea from Diapalante with our speaker, Paul. Image by Margaret Budgen.

The Womens Institute



2021 was another successful year for Ashwell WI, even though much of the planned programme for earlier in the year had to continue on Zoom. Margie Wallace continues as our president and Margaret Budgen was the technical

driving force behind much of this year's programme until July, when normal service in the URC Hall resumed.

Our online Christmas Zoom Event was a great success. We had a get together with games, carols and reading. At another meeting Margaret related her experiences meeting the Rich and the Famous.

Master P entertained us from Diapalante in Senegal, even preparing a meal. Who says live meetings are better? The mother of an Ashwell resident, former agony aunt for Cosmopolitan, Irma Kurtz, joined us on Zoom in March from Bloomsbury. Martin Johnson from RSPB told us about garden birds and why we need them. Our May AGM was enlivened by Caroline Taunt, Mary Rutter's daughter, telling us about what it is like to live in Germany. In June Kumud Ghandi regaled us with the health properties of herbs and spices. This was to be our last Zoom meeting.

Unfortunately, there were no more trips to the opera or ballet at the Broadway, no more film evenings and no chance of once again running the refreshment tent at the Ashwell Show.

For those of us fortunate enough to have access to Zoom it was a splendid start to 2021. Apologies to those who were unable to join us.

In July we welcomed at our first live event Welwyn Harmony, who entertained us very royally. We had an afternoon tea courtesy of Liz Chandler in August when Paul Rabbitts gave a wonderful talk on London's Royal Parks. This was followed in September by a talk from Sharon Moat on the plight of our chalk streams. In October Andy Malcolm from the Fisherman's Mission related to us the real cost of fish and chips. A bonus was that Andy sang some sea shanties. Sue Birch stepped up to the brink in November because our original speaker was double-booked.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month. Come and join us and see what we have to offer. We are very keen to make new friends. Here's hoping for another successful year for Ashwell WI, if perhaps a slightly less unusual one.

Sheila Hogan, Secretary ✉ shogan_uk@yahoo.co.uk

Ashwell Jazz



In September we were delighted to hold our first meeting for well over a year. In the early part of the year a couple of programmes were shared online but although the music was enjoyed it was not the same as meeting together.

Our first programme was entitled 'Friends Together Again', followed by 'The cosmos and our place in it according to Jazz' and '1974, a Year in Jazz'. Our December meeting was one we have done a number of times, when we all brought tunes which we wanted to play.

At our meetings one person presents an hour-long programme on a topic of their choosing. For the second part of the evening other people bring numbers on the same subject. The result is an evening of varied jazz, with us often hearing tunes and players we have not heard before.

If you enjoy jazz, want to know more and want a relaxed evening once a month, we will be pleased to welcome you. We meet at 59 High Street on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. You will need to bring your own refreshment. There is no charge.

Please give me a ring if you would like to know more.

David Short ☎ 742385 ✉ david@merchantflock.co.uk

Ashwell's Big Sing

Ashwell's Big Sing Choir is a friendly, local community choir where adults can come together and sing to their hearts' content. No vocal training or ability to read music is required, just a willingness to learn and a love of music. We perform a varied repertoire from musicals to pop and rock classics, as well as doing exercises to help develop your singing voice.

We meet every Monday during term time at the Ashwell Village Hall from 8:00 to 9:00 pm and fees are charged in advance. All music is provided, as well as links to backing and guide vocal tracks. The choir also enjoys participating in local events such as Ashwell at Home and our very own charity Christmas concerts.

We always welcome new members and really hope to spread the joy of singing to all in the community.

Liz Townsend, Choir Leader

✉ ashwellsbigsing@gmail.com ☎ 07753 754 452

Ashwell Horticultural Society

2021 – The Year of the Garden, or so it seemed to many of our members. When government restrictions were eased in June we hastily arranged a series of Open Gardens, each Thursday evening for five consecutive weeks. We visited members' gardens and really appreciated the opportunity to meet outdoors, glass of wine in hand, and catch up after months of relative solitude. And in such glorious surroundings, each garden with its own unique style. We held our Annual General Meeting while attending one of the Open Gardens and re-elected the committee, adding Janet Mahy to our number. Thank you, Janet, for joining us, and for taking on the role of Treasurer, and thank you, Sue, for keeping us financially afloat for many years.

We re-introduced the Annual Show at the beginning of September, and while it was a show with a difference, fewer entries and prizes, we had our prize-giving the following day at Jeremy Fordham's beautiful garden in Odsey Park, when Tony and Annie Coe were presented with the RHS Banksian Medal for the best exhibit in show.

October was to be our first normal meeting for 18 months when Mary Gray gave an amazing presentation, describing how she had transformed the garden at Hill House, Odsey Park, during their relatively short time there. In November Catherine Wilmers and Kathryn MacKenzie spoke about the issues facing chalk streams today, with reference to the River Ivel. At our final meeting of the year in December we were entertained by the Historic Gardener, Michael Graham, who talked about the traditions surrounding a Medieval Christmas and sang and played old musical instruments of the period. We also enjoyed our traditional mulled wine and mince pies.

It has been a very different but successful year for the society, and we have been pleased to welcome several new members in 2021.

Please check our website for up-to-date information:
ashwellhortics.btck.co.uk

Margaret Gilliam ☎ 742040

✉ aandmgilliam@btopenworld.com



Border Ramblers. Image by Janet Mahy.

Border Ramblers

In 2021 the Ramblers continued to wander around the village on one Sunday each month. The usual routes have become perhaps a bit over familiar, especially after the lockdown when walking was just about all we could do by way of exercise.

Looking forward, the plan is to have a programme of walks, starting in the early Spring. To ring in the changes, the idea is to go to locations further afield and alternate them with trips around the village. This will mean squeezing into a few cars but the pay-off will be greater variety and, we hope, more interest. There will still be one or two longer mid-week outings for the diehards, with an inevitable stop-off for lunch and a drink.

In July our longer and well-attended mid-week walk went out to just beyond Guilden Morden. It took in the White Wood Nature Reserve on the way out and the community orchard on the way back. The day turned out to be just about the hottest and sunniest of the year, so by the time we stopped off at the Guilden Morden Three Tuns we were all ready for a restorative drink or two. The lunch was good and so was the conversation under the shade of the trees in the garden. The baking heat during the saunter back across open fields didn't seem to matter somehow.

If you fancy joining us, look out for the announcements on the noticeboard by the Rose and Crown or, better still, ask to be included on the email list. We usually aim to cover five miles at a fairly easy pace. New faces are always welcome.

Gillian Duckworth ✉ gillianduckworth@yahoo.co.uk

Ian Thomas ✉ nextodsey@yahoo.co.uk

Norton Mahy ✉ nortonmahy@gmail.com

Mid-Life Crisis Car Club



The car club's activities in 2021 were again severely affected by the pandemic restrictions. However, we did manage two well supported scenic runs.

One ended at the Cowpers Arms in Letty Green, near Hertford and the other at The Cricketers in Clavering, Essex. In both cases the weather was fine, allowing for top down motoring.

During August several of our cars joined the display at the Pirton Classic Car Meet, which is becoming a regular addition to our events calendar, similar to the Kimbolton Classic Car Show which again fell victim to Covid-19.

In November we had our well attended Annual Dinner at the Bushel and Strike. Our after-dinner speaker was Piers Storie-Pugh OBE who gave a fascinating insight into many of the escapes from Colditz Castle during WW2.

As usual, our year ended with our Decoke Ramble when we leave our cars behind and walk off the Christmas excesses. This year the walk started and finished at the Pig and Abbot at Abington Pigotts. The year 2022 marks our 30th anniversary, which we hope to celebrate with a full calendar of events.

New members are always welcome. Membership costs a mere £10 per annum and is open to anyone with a sports car, classic car or convertible. Our aim is to find excuses to drive beautiful country roads and to find good places to eat. For more information see our website at www.midlife-crisis.org.uk

Robin Lipscombe ☎ 742584



Rose & Crown Folk

Ashwell's folk session is now 27 years old, having started in December 1994 with a charity 'Sing-along-a-thon' to raise money for the church tower.

2021 started in lockdown and we had no option but to continue the Zoom sessions. This did allow us to meet and socialise, but the fact that it's impossible to join in when someone performs on Zoom only underlined the true social nature of our usual pub sessions. We did have opportunities to chat and to have a drink together, but it really wasn't the same.

It was with considerable rejoicing that, from July, we were able to meet in person (at first in the garden) and things really went with a bang. We moved indoors in September and filled the pub for October's session. Ironically, it was our success which contributed to having to pull the December session. Knowing that we usually have a capacity crowd for our Festival of Carols and Christmas Songs in December, and with the new Omicron variant of Covid being very much an unknown quantity, we felt that it would be unwise to continue and be a possible super-spreader event for Ashwell.

At the time of writing, 2022 is a bit of a puzzle. We've decided not to meet in January (a bank holiday and usually a quiet night anyway) and to see how things go thereafter. We may end up meeting on Zoom again for a month or two.

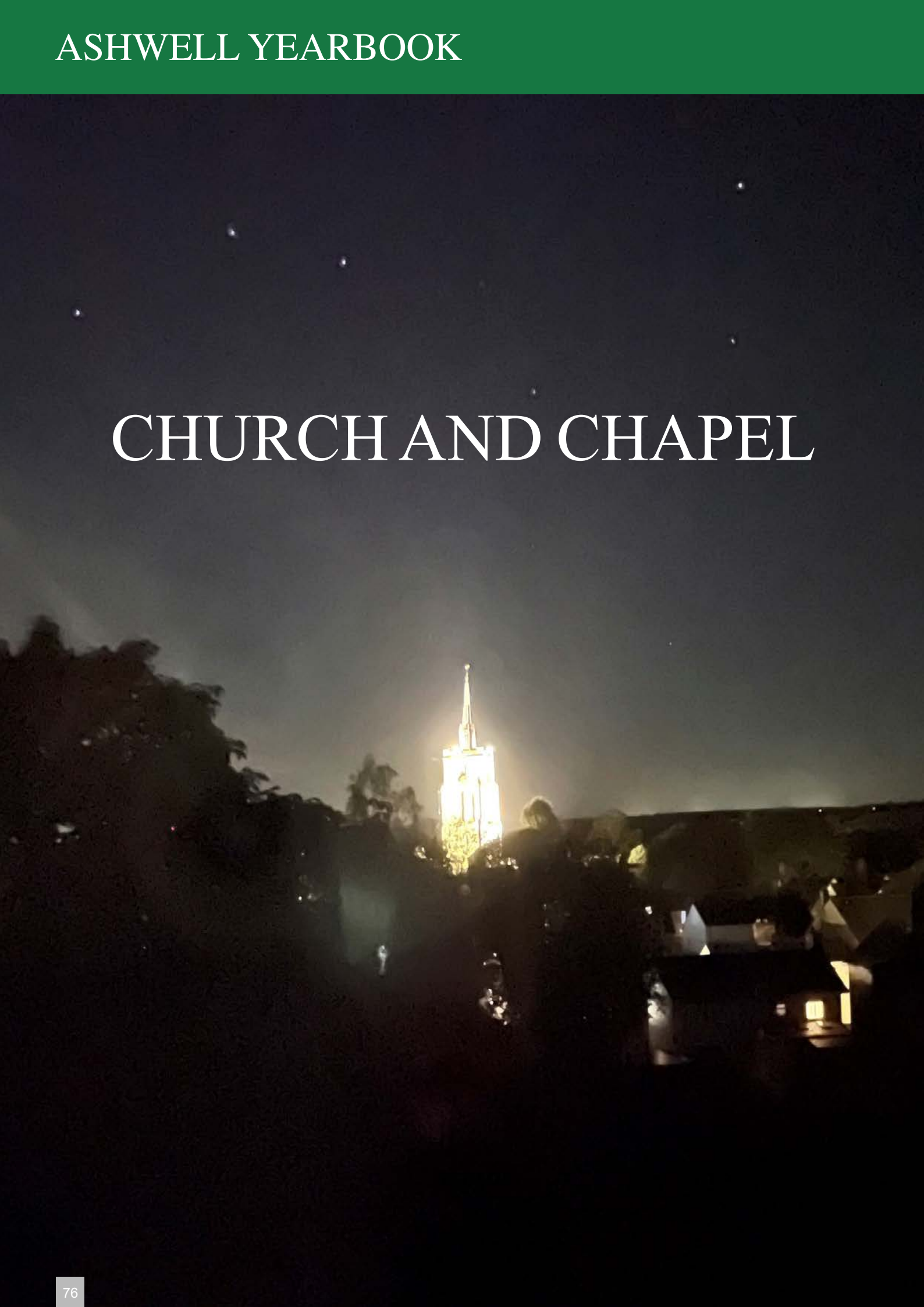
We have produced a programme for 2022, with a different theme for each month. We now also publish a monthly article in Ashwell Village News, so you can keep in touch with what's going on by reading that. You could also look out for the posters on the noticeboards and inside the Rose & Crown. We also have a Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/RoseAndCrownFolk

We will (eventually) continue to meet on the first Monday of every month from 8:30 to 11:00 pm in the bar of the Rose & Crown. The sessions are very informal and everyone is welcome. You don't have to be musically talented or confident though it helps if you are inclined to join in. Please contact Ian for details.

The Committee are (from time to time, and in no particular order): Mike Holmes, Jon Stark, Brin Siller, Sarah Talks, Ian Chandler, Ken Hollow, Julia Mitchell and the Murtons.

Ian Chandler ☎ 743091

CHURCH AND CHAPEL



Ashwell Parish Church



Despite the pandemic restrictions and the vacancy, much still happened at St Mary's in 2021, with some real causes for celebration. Shoots of new life began to spring up during the Autumn and it was wonderful for Church to feel a little more 'normal' as the full choir returned to singing, Discoverers restarted on Sunday mornings and as we welcomed back events such as Messy Church, the Book Weekend and Christmas Fair.

I began my ministry in Ashwell, Hinxworth and Newnham on 29th September, in a service of Collation, Installation and Induction led by the Lord Bishop of St Albans, the Rt Rev'd Dr Alan Smith, and the Archdeacon of Hertford, the Venerable Janet Mackenzie. I feel humbled to be the new rector here. As well as a new start for me, it was a chance for the congregation to affirm the role of the whole Church in encouraging each other to grow in faith and love and in praying and caring for the community in which we live. I've already discovered some of the many ways in which the congregation of St Mary's is involved in village life and I look forward to being part of that in the months and years to come.

We also have a duty to preserve our beautiful Church building, a sacred space in which people have rejoiced, celebrated, given thanks and lamented for hundreds of years. The Church is open every day and we love to welcome people in, whether they are exploring the history of the Church, escaping the weather or simply finding some stillness and peace in the midst of busy lives.

Nothing in the Church can happen without the commitment of a huge collective of volunteers, who give their time, expertise and money to support both the Church building and the activities within it. There are far too many people to list here, but a very big thank you to everyone who is involved in the life of our benefice.

Rev'd Chris Cambell, ☎ 742277

📍 www.stmarysashwell.org.uk

The Friends of St Mary's Church

The Friends is a registered charity which was founded more than 25 years ago. Its sole purpose is to raise money to help maintain both the fabric and the contents of Ashwell's Parish Church.

We are very fortunate to have such a large and beautiful Church at the centre of our village. As residents of Ashwell we are, by default, the beneficiaries of the hard work, craftsmanship and skills of past generations who were often considerably poorer than us and who first built St Mary's and then maintained her over many centuries.

The Friends is not a part of the Church or the Church of England but is an independent charity which acts on its own initiative and which raises its own funds from its generous donors. Many of our donors are not otherwise involved in the life of the Church but are concerned that St Mary's is preserved and, indeed, enhanced for the enjoyment and use of future generations. We are very grateful to them all, particularly over the past two years when their continuing support has been very important to us in the absence of many of our normal fundraising activities.

In 2021 we were delighted that Karen Rogers and her colleagues were able, once again, to hold the Book Fair, which was a tremendous success, raising almost £4,000 for the Friends. The Book Fair takes a great deal of careful organisation and hard work and we are profoundly grateful to Karen and her whole team. Susan Greenbank, who raises money for us via her very successful plant sales, also kindly arranged a very interesting and enjoyable Ted Talk by the Cambridge academic, Ted Powell, about the influence of America on King Edward VIII. I look forward to welcoming you to our forthcoming events later in 2022.

In the past few years, the Friends have made substantial contributions to the repair work in the chancel and to the work to the north and south aisles. All are now in excellent repair and will be for many generations to come. More work always needs to be done and we anticipate being called on to assist with the costs of the repairs to the tower in the near future.

If you wish to join the Trustees of the Friends, give a one-off donation to us or become a regular donor, please let me know by contacting me. Thank you.

Stephen ten Hove, Chairman ☎ 742262

✉ stephentenhove@icloud.com

St Mary's Church Choir

2021 will be remembered as a difficult year for us singers. But, despite the very obvious effects of the pandemic, we still managed to put on choral music in the Church. For churchgoers there was little to celebrate in the first quarter of the year, with no entry into Church permitted and then, when the congregation was allowed back, no hymns could be sung except by a small number of choir members. We managed to have some solo spots in January, February and March and all those who went to great efforts to do that are to be thanked and commended.

In April we were permitted to have six voices singing – and we sang some interesting things including *In thine arm* (Bach), *Hide not thou thy face* (Farrant), *Ave verum* (Byrd), *Stabat mater* (Pergolesi), *Lord let me know mine end* (Greene) and *Elegia* (Karl Jenkins). A regular group of six sang which, sadly, excluded many during this time. Those who sang did an incredible job and we are grateful to them - and to the patience of everyone else.

With a return to some form of normality after the summer, the whole choir could sing together again, albeit distanced. Although the decades-old tradition at St Mary's never actually stopped throughout the year, bringing everyone back together was a joy. Choir numbers steadily increased and we numbered up to 20 on a Sunday morning.

We also welcomed our new Rector, Rev'd Chris Campbell, in late September. Her installation service packed the Church for the first time in 18 months. A new beginning which was so very welcome.

Although continuing with Sunday morning sung services, keeping sung Evensong going proved more difficult. Judy Catterick MBE was the Director of Music at St Mary's for almost 60 years. Along with her late husband, Rev'd Jack Catterick, she introduced sung evensong to the Church soon after Jack's arrival in Ashwell in 1953. No one can tell you how many different Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis settings she has directed! Sadly, last year Judy decided it was time to put away her baton. Her service to the Church has been significant and we would not have the church music we now enjoy without her. There is in the choir an enthusiasm which she created and her legacy will endure.

The Junior Choir, which restarted in October (after 18 months) was small in number but large in personality. *I will follow him* from Sister Act was among the music we performed.

Advent and Christmas were busy times. The Carol Service was brightened with Philip Stopford's *There is no Rose* and *The Shepherd's Farewell* by Berlioz. We sang at the Newnham Carol service in early December and, under the direction of Guy Mackenzie, at the Village Carol Concert. Midnight Mass and Christmas Day included such gems as *The Nativity Carol* (Rutter) and that crowd-puller *Lully Lulla Lullay* (Stopford).

Again, my thanks to our organist, John Rowlands, who keeps the show ticking along through thick and thin. Also to our choir librarians, Sheelagh Bennett and Ros Neat, whose service to the Church is invaluable. If you wish to sing in the choir, you will be so very welcome. Feel free to contact Bene't.

Bene't Coldstream ☎ 742288 ✉ bcoldstream@yahoo.co.uk
John Rowlands ✉ john@ashwell.org.uk ☎ 742758

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EMAIL jane.buxton@icloud.com



The completion of the new facilities.

Completion of the New Facilities in the North Aisle of St Mary's

After a succession of delays, owing to extra archaeology caused by the unexpected discovery of a large barrel vault, delays in obtaining suitable stone, supply chain issues and tradesmen isolating, the new facilities in the north aisle of St Mary's were completed in late April 2021.

The quality of the joinery is superb and is a credit to the contractors, Lodge and Sons Ltd. The overall effect is quite dramatic and the light stain applied to the large areas of oak panelling helps it to blend in with the existing vestry and unify the whole north aisle. The whole construction reflects the hard work and inspired design of Oliver Cooper of Freeland Rees Roberts, our Church architects.

All the rooms have ceilings, which will exclude the contributions from our little flying friends, the four species of bats resident in the Church. This will make the whole area much more hygienic and easier to keep clean. The kitchen and disabled toilet have armoured glass ceiling panels which can be safely walked upon when cleaning is required. The kitchen has a fridge, dishwasher, two ovens, hob, microwave and a constant boiling-water unit, so no more kettles! There is a separate, second sink for the flower arrangers and a wide serving hatch with a plinth heater beneath the cupboards.

The toilets have no-touch flush and no-touch taps, soap dispensers, hand driers and heating. The disabled toilet has an emergency help pull-ring and a fold-down baby-changing unit.

A new flower cupboard has been created off the spacious new north porch lobby, which will release more storage space in the old storage cupboard in the south aisle. The re-laid floor in the north porch incorporates a permanent disabled ramp and a handrail. Provisional cable ducting has been installed under the porch for future bollard lights along the north and west paths in the churchyard. Extra cabling has also been installed for the PA system.

Although the work was completed at the end of April, the restrictions in place in the Church, owing to the coronavirus pandemic, delayed the full use of the new facilities until October. However, all those who have used the new kitchen are enthusiastic about the improvement over the old facilities.

We have yet to decide on the exact location for the memorial plaque which will commemorate those souls interred in the barrel vault and those whose remains were disturbed during the works and which will be re-interred in the churchyard. A descriptive panel will be mounted on the new electrical cupboard door, describing the barrel vault and the associated archaeology. A donor board will also be hung on the panelling, recording the generosity of our donors. These include Mr Eric Gurney, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Friends of St Mary's and the Diocese of St Albans.

These new, modern facilities will add greatly to the comfort and usefulness of the Church, both for regular services and for the many other community activities that St Mary's will be hosting once again as normality returns.

Mike Taffs, Fabric Action Group, St Mary's PCC

✉ mike@taffs.org.uk

Ashwell Village News



Since the new team took over at the Ashwell Village News early in 2021 there have been some changes, but most of them have been reverting to popular features, such as a regular 'Important Numbers' page and more reports from village groups and activities. Some of the changes made by the previous team have continued - a wide range of front cover artists, more colour pages, an electronic online copy and good support from local advertisers. We try to strike a balance between longer articles and shorter reports about things that have happened or are going to happen in the village. In this way the magazine is part notice board, part historic record, part 'a good read'. A trawl through the Ashwell Village News archive in Ashwell Museum is very interesting.

While the magazine is supported by St Mary's PCC and has a Church focus, we are also very pleased to be able to offer space to the Parish Council, Ashwell School, Ashwell Museum, Greening Ashwell, and the United Reformed Church among others. We are very grateful to all the contributors, both regular and occasional, advertisers, and most of all, our readers and supporters. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work put in by Alfie Talks, Richard Young, Jo Adams, Mark Eaton and Julia Mitchell and Wrightsons, our printers.

We would be glad to have more cover artists, contributors and editors. Any suggestions or offers of help can be made via the email address below. Thank you!

Sarah Talks

✉ ashwellvillagenews@gmail.com

St Mary's Church Flowers

It has been a very busy and enjoyable time for the church flower arrangers since the end of lockdown and our team has had to work especially hard to accommodate last-minute weddings as a result of the pandemic. We are looking forward to a more straightforward year with more time to plan for these occasions, of which there are plenty in the diary.

We have received many compliments on the flowers and we would like to thank everybody involved and all those who have very kindly made donations.

If you need to discuss flowers for any church occasion, please get in touch with one of the following:

Caroline Feast ☎ 743233, **Suzanne Humbert** ☎ 742961,
Michelle Notley ☎ 742556



Sign up for regular information
about the village at:

www.ashwell.gov.uk



Nativity scene under Lychgate.

St Mary's Church Discoverers and Children's Activities

"All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your children." Isaiah ch.54 v.13

At various times during 2021 our children's activities have taken place outdoors, online or in Church. We have tried to keep children and young families involved in our worship and other activities when times have been anything but 'normal'.

In March, we made paper chain people for our Mothering Sunday service, in which we showed how we are all linked together in God's family. Isabel read the Gospel for us and Lucy sang a song.

In April, there was an Easter trail in the churchyard and an opportunity to help create an Easter garden under the lychgate.

In July, our outdoor Messy Church focused on the environment. We made bees and butterflies, birdfeeders and took home wild flower seeds to encourage pollinators in our garden. A banner was hung in the Church porch to display the children's art work.

In September, an outdoor service was held to celebrate Climate Sunday. We gave thanks for our wonderful world and prayed for help to preserve it. This time it was Daisy's turn to sing, accompanied by Ken on the guitar.

In October, the junior choir was able to resume singing alongside the adults during Sunday morning worship. This enabled us to re-start our Discoverers' activities, including an investigation of all sorts of Bibles on Bible Sunday.

In November, we were busy helping with the Thank God it's Sunday service about the disciples catching lots of fish; making crowns for Christ the King at a busy baptism service, and holding a very well-attended Advent Messy Church, 'Getting ready for Christmas'.

In December, the junior choir led the congregation in learning a new song at the Thank God it's Sunday service and once again helped to create our nativity scene under the lychgate.

We look forward to many more activities in 2022.

If you would like to find out more, please go to our website www.stmarysashwell.org.uk or contact me.

Jo Adams ☎ 01763 241587 ✉ adams561j@gmail.com



Ashwell Mothers' Union

Our members from Ashwell and Hinxworth kept together during the pandemic through Zoom and enjoyed a variety of speakers. Subjects covered were Human Trafficking, Amnesty International, Ashwell Patients' Group, The Church Army, Photography, The Queen's Flight and Bereavement. As soon as we could meet in person we were able to greet visitors to our meetings.

Members continued with their crafts, making items for the children's ward at The Lister Hospital and sending funds for various projects run by the MU in St Albans Diocese. We supported local refugees with funds going towards supplying starter kits for mothers and their children when they are ready to move into a new, safe house. The kits include new bedding, kitchen equipment and toys for the children. Funds also went to Away From It All Holidays (AFIA), a project which gives families in adversity a break by the sea, or perhaps a day out. In all, over 3,000 people in the Diocese benefited from the work and fund-raising of the members of all the branches in St Albans Diocese.

Not all of us are gifted with the talent of sewing and knitting but this doesn't stop our members from praying for those who are in need. It brings great comfort to those who are sick, in trouble or lonely to know that they are not forgotten.

We were delighted to welcome some new members. Rev'd Chris Campbell, already a member of Mothers' Union, enrolled three new members at our November meeting.

If you would like to come along to our meetings on the second Thursday of the month at 10:30 am you will receive a very warm welcome. During 2021, meetings were held in St Mary's Church but please see Ashwell Village News for any change in venue. Come, Taste and See.

Caroline Evens ☎ 743587

Bellringers

Having been unable to ring since early in 2020 owing to social distancing measures, we started 2021 under the same conditions. With the relaxation of regulations in midsummer, we could finally start practising again, albeit with limited numbers.

By the end of August we were able to assemble a team to ring for a wedding, following which we rang for two further weddings in September, although we had to ask ringers from other towers to make up our numbers for all these occasions.

At the end of October we held an 'Introduction to Bellringing' evening to recruit some new ringers, during which we gave a talk on the history of Ashwell's bells, why we ring, as well as what is involved in learning to ring, and a quick try at pulling a bell rope. We had six people attend, four of whom have now started to learn to ring and swell our numbers.

In November we rang for our first service when we rang half-muffled to mark Remembrance Sunday. At the end of the month, we rang to celebrate the life of a long-standing member of the Church congregation before the funeral.

December saw us ringing before the village Carol Concert as well as for Christmas services in Church.

We are always happy to welcome new ringers to the tower, whether you are a beginner or past ringer who would like to start again.

We practise on Thursday evenings from 8:00 pm; come along to the tower, you will be made most welcome.

Steve White, Tower Captain ☎ 01763 853538

Ian Chandler, Tower Secretary ☎ 743091



The Pop Up Pantry.

Ashwell Food Pantry

Started during the first coronavirus lockdown of March 2020, the food pantry continues to be well used into its second year. It remains a referral-free service, which those in need can access easily and immediately and we work with local support groups to assist in that. Demand has gone up and down over the past year as people and situations change but we have had several regular users throughout and continue to see and hear that it is of great benefit. It provides a support to local villagers, families and single people when they need a helping hand to feed themselves.

We have moved from the table to a more permanent home in a large bookcase with doors, so the food is better protected from the bats and it has less impact on the floor space of the Church and looks much prettier!

The pantry is still run on the generous donations of the local community. Donations can be left in the box in the Church or Ashwell Stores. Constantly in demand are tins of ready-made meals, baked beans, dessert and fruit, as well as coffee, laundry liquid/powder, toiletries and condiments. We sincerely thank you for your help in providing this much needed service.

The Ashwell Food Pantry Team

✉ ashwellfoodpantry@gmail.com

Zoar Baptist Church

SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday 10:30 am and 2:30 pm

Tuesday 7:15 pm

All are most welcome at our services.

We believe the Holy Bible is God's Word, and the message it contains is central to our worship. We use the Authorised (King James) version. Our services are simple and reverent, and are conducted by visiting ministers.



Zoar Baptist Church.



Ashwell United Reformed Church.

Ashwell United Reformed Church



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

It is truly good to be able to report on a more encouraging and hopeful year at the URC. Sunday morning worship started again on Easter Sunday and we were able to maintain a regular pattern of Sunday

services each month – on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. The URC does not have its own Minister, and has not had one for many years, but we continue to be supported by local ‘lay’ preachers from Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire who all bring good Christian messages, thoughtful prayers (and even the occasional joke!) for us to mull over during the following weeks.

Ashwell URC is one of eight churches in a North Hertfordshire Group, most of which have small congregations. We all hope that a Minister may answer our ‘call’ to come and serve our Group in 2022 and in the meantime we all do our best to serve our communities in whatever ways we can.

At Ashwell in 2021, this has included organising our popular events such as our Saturday Afternoon Teas in July and

August. Although numbers were down compared with 2018/19, the teas raised over £600.00 towards Church funds, which have been sorely depleted through lack of income. Warm thanks to all those groups who helped us achieve this.

Later in the year, our Harvest Lunch and Autumn Fair attracted friends old and new, including families staying at the caravan site. The choice of lunches was amazing. We hope that 2022 will bring increased confidence in attending social events of all kinds in the village and that we see lots more of you at our events.

And (at the time of writing) the very good news is that our repair work to the floors in vestry and Church kitchen is almost completed. Once they got started, Steve Cook’s builders made excellent progress during October and November. We are most grateful to neighbours in Silver Street for helping to guarantee daily parking for their vans.

We are also very appreciative of all those who have hired the Church Hall during the year, as soon as their organisations could start up again. Thank you, all of you, and we look forward to welcoming you again in 2022. Thanks also to our two ‘special’ ladies who help keep Church and hall clean and tidy. Finally, a reminder that our morning services start at 10:45 am and that everyone is welcome.

Chris James, Church Secretary ☎ 742684

San Carswell, Hall Bookings ☎ 742757

From Our Registers for 2021

Ashwell Parish Council

Interments at Ashwell Cemetery

25th March

24th April

27th May

28th June

21st August

7th September

13th September

18th October

29th October

30th October

11th November

21st December

David Arthur Chadbourne

Margaret Rose Pawson

Olive Ethel Worboys

Dorothy Joyce Roberts

Peter William Sheldrick

Pamela Joan Bishop

Kathleen May Mander

Martin Henry Lush

Avril Petrina Westcott

Nellie Elsie Marion Floyd

Margaret Eluned Waide

Susan Beverley Edsall

Parish Church of St Mary's Ashwell

Baptisms

21st November

19th December

Marriages

10th July

14th August

16th October

30th October

Funerals

29th October

30th November

16th December

Service of Thanksgiving

7th September

Memorial Service

18th October

Burial of Ashes

11th November

Alexander Peter Alfred Hague

Elizabeth Lara Gaynor

Craig George Hagland and Helen Elizabeth Robson

Nicholas Donald Bridgeman and Francesca Annabel O'Neill

Max Jackson and Jodie Hyde

Kieran Day and Vicki Breen

Avril Westcott

Eleanor Bryant

Roger Taunton (at N Herts Crematorium)

Ruth West

Martin Lush

Margaret Waide (at Ashwell Cemetery)

Ashwell United Reformed Church

Funerals

14th October

6th January 2022

John Kenneth Gardiner

Dolly Andrews

EVENTS

Ashwell Music Festival

Shakespeare wrote in Twelfth Night, 'If music be the food of love, play on'. Ashwell Music Festival has sadly been missing from the social calendar of Ashwell for the last two years owing to the pandemic. It is difficult to cast our minds back to the last festival which took place in 2019, when 670 tickets were sold with proceeds going to St Mary's Restoration Fund. Last year the people of Ashwell certainly needed love in such troubled times. I have certainly missed live music of any genre in the village.

Ashwell Music Festival was started by Canon Jack Catterick in 1953. Since that time, the festival has grown from the original concept of a summer school for young people to involve professional musicians, some with national and indeed international reputations. Historically, the festival has been a week-long event held in St. Mary's Church; however, more recently the festival has expanded to include other venues - the United Reformed Church and Ashwell Primary School.

We maintain the original aims of encouraging both young and local performers. The Festival has a proven record of providing high quality yet affordable performances during the week of the events, resulting in a unique arts event for the area. The Festival has wide appeal, attracting audiences from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and beyond. Our plans for an inclusive festival in 2020 and subsequently 2021, to include all styles of music and acts to appeal to all ages, were thwarted. However, Ashwell Music Festival 2022 plans to do just that - provide both afternoon and evening concerts, aimed at all ages from the very young to the elderly folk of our village. There is also a drumming workshop! Please see the full programme below and check out our webpage at ashwellmusicfestival.org.uk and follow us on Facebook Ashwell Music Festival.

However, Ashwell Music Festival only happens because of the effort put in by the Ashwell Music Festival Committee and the band of willing volunteers who appear as if by magic each year. Thank you to you all. Many thanks also to our sponsors, without whose continued support the Music Festival would not be able to go ahead.

Lastly a plea to you all - do you have what it takes to join our small but happy committee?

We are always looking for new members, young or old, who would like to become more involved, whether that be in selecting acts, preparing advertising literature, being our online social media guru, helping to run the bar etc. The list of jobs is endless - the only attributes you need to have are a sense of fun and a love of music! For further information, please contact me.

Tracy Young, Chair of Ashwell Music Festival

✉ Tracy.a.young@btinternet.com

Please put the Festival dates in your diary now. Tickets are available from: `

- our website www.ashwellmusicfestival.org.uk
- ticketsource
- or from Rhubarb and Mustard.

Ashwell Music Festival Programme 2022

Wednesday May 18th, 7:00 pm at St. Mary's Church
YOUNG MUSICIANS' CONCERT
 Non-Ticketed Event - Retiring Collection

Thursday, May 19th, 7:30 pm at St. Mary's Church
LET US ENTERTAIN YOU
- A NIGHT OF MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANCE!
 Ticket Price: Adults £10, U16s £5
(Proceeds shared with Ashwell's Fight Against Cancer & St Mary's Church)

Thursday May 19th, 2:00 pm at the URC Hall
LAURA CUSTODIO SABAS AND LYDIA HILLERUDH
 Ticket Price: £10

Friday May 20th, 2:00 pm at the URC Hall
DAVE RANCE'S ROCKIN' CHAIR JAZZ BAND
 Ticket Price: £10

Friday May 20th 8:00 pm at St. Mary's Church
CELTIC KRISTAL
 Ticket Price: Adults £12, U16s £8

Saturday May 21st, 10:00 am & 11:30 am at St. Mary's Church
DRUMMING WORKSHOP
 Ticket Price: Adults £5, U16s £5

Saturday May 21st, 3:30pm at the United Reformed Church
MARCO MARCONI
 Ticket Price: Adults £10, U16s £5

Saturday May 21st, 8:00 pm at St. Mary's Church
BACK TO THE 80S
 Ticket Price: Adults £20, U16s £10

Sunday May 22nd, 2:00 pm at the United Reformed Church
CRAIG MADDOX
 Ticket Price: Adults £10, U16s £5

Sunday May 22nd, 6:00 pm at St. Mary's Church
FESTAL EVENSONG
 Non-Ticketed Event - Retiring Collection



Murder at the Springs

Ashwell Theatre Club

On a glorious Sunday afternoon in early June the village was out in force, trying to solve the mystery: 'Was she/wasn't she murdered at the Springs?'. Apparently, one hundred years ago in 1921 there was a LOT of drama unfolding around the siting of the proposed War Memorial here in Ashwell. The location near the Cricket Ground was an obvious choice but Ashwella Christy, the village gossip and trouble maker, who was NOT well liked, wanted it at the centre of the village near where she lived. Ashwella had been found hanging over the balustrade at the Springs. Now it was the villagers' task to solve the mystery of her demise.

Actors were stationed at various locations throughout the village and the audience moved in 'bubbles' from one to the next trying to decipher clues. If you were one of our village detectives, I have it on authority from the author of this cleverly written 'Whodunnit',

Christine Schwick, that Mrs Christy WAS murdered. She did not commit suicide and a LOT of people are accountable. Hercule Petit Pois is still looking for clues but I can now reveal all. Just keep it to yourself!

Ashwella Christy died of a snake bite but had been previously poisoned to render her unconscious and then hung over the Springs to make it LOOK like suicide!

'Why?' you may ask! Dr Quarantino and Hercule Petit Pois mused over the corpse and Mrs Christy's Ghost was still lurking at The Springs where she and Constable Covid hovered over the Murder scene.

Well, Sherbet Holmes was the mastermind and coerced the participants to hasten the demise of Ashwella who had discovered he was actually a World War 1 German Spy, no less. There was no love lost between Mrs Snootypants, the snake owner, and Mrs Christy who had been spreading nasty rumours about Mrs Snootypants' deceased husband's infidelity with numerous members of the W.I.

Buster Cherry, the butler at The Bury, had easy access to poison from Dr Quarantino's unlocked medical bag and there was tension between him and the deceased because she had taunted his nephew with a white feather, making him join the army, despite being only 15, and his life had been cut short in battle. Buster, along with the maid, Maud Lynn, administered the poison and Maud was glad to see Ashwella gone as she had discovered the maid was a little light fingered and the missing pearls from The Bury 'happened' to be in Maud's care!

To make the Murder look like suicide, the Reverend Morehead assisted by supplying one of the church bell ropes as a noose. He had been angry with Mrs Christy because she had written to the Bishop, suggesting he had engaged in a threesome with Dr

Quarantino and Lord Logan Berry, when in fact all they shared was a love of jazz music. The village strongwoman, Vera von Trapp, was persuaded by Sherbet Homes to carry the body because she was sympathetic to his past.

The audience heard fortunes from the gypsies, and the village Scout troop assisted with the clues, along with Meaty Crumpo and his able assistant, Arthur Chop!

All great fun, great afternoon but remember Shhhhhh! Don't tell Hercule Petit Pois if you see him. He is still wandering around the village. I suppose he will work it out, eventually....

Jo Auckland



Constable Covid (Jack Quense) guards the crime site ably assisted by the ghost of Ashwella Christy (Carol Fiske).



Buster Cherry (Robin Lipscombe) the butler and Maud Lynn (Wendy Scott) the maid serve up more clues.



Dr Quarantino (John Robertshaw) and Hercule Petit Pois (Rich Keam) muse over the corpse of Ashwella Christy.



Meaty Crumpo (Rita Dear) and assistant Arthur Loin (Alissa Slater) add some meat to the story.



www.ashwellathome.org.uk

Ashwell At Home



Ashwell at Home Day, the village open day, has not taken place since 2019, owing to the Covid pandemic, but it is being enthusiastically revived in 2022. This charity event has been running annually almost every year since 1983. The proceeds are shared between Ashwell Museum, Ashwell Primary School and St Mary's Church.

On the great day the community opens up to visitors from far and near and we try to share some of the pleasures and treasures of the village with each other and with people from elsewhere.

The event runs from 11:00 am till 5:00 pm and our theme for 2022 is Health and Well-being. It will be a day to remember, a day when we can all enjoy and feel justly proud of all our village has to offer.

There will be open gardens (large, small and tiny), displays and exhibitions, trails, talks and walks, health and fitness taster sessions, children's activities, art and craft workshops, music and dance, culminating in a short concert by Ashwell's Big Sing at the Church at the end of the afternoon. Refreshments will be served at the Village Hall, the School, the Parish Room and the URC Hall. You will be able to view the whole programme as it gradually emerges on our website between now and 8th May:

At the heart of the whole event is the willingness of Ashwellians such as ourselves to get involved in a day which brings the whole community together in a joint enterprise. The feeling of well-being which that brings to the village is just as important as any funds which are raised.

The day is very labour intensive and so we hope that, if you are not already committed to one of the organisations involved, you might be willing to help, perhaps by donating or serving refreshments, by staffing the free car park in the Donkey Meadow (High Street), or by 'garden sitting' for people who are opening their garden but would like a break for an hour or two.

Alternatively, you could buy a wristband, which comes with a full programme booklet and gives you admission to all the activities and events. The cost is £8 on the day or £7 if bought in advance, either online or from one of the village shops which display the Ashwell at Home sign.

Admission to everything is free to anyone under 18 if accompanied by a wristband-wearing adult.

If your lives are already too crowded with other commitments to do any of the above, please make a donation. Whoever you are, you can play your part in this community project. Thank you.

Cliff Jenkinson, Chairman

☎ 742592

✉ cliffjenkinson47@live.co.uk

Ashwell Book Weekend

8th - 10th October 2021

2021 was a bumper year for books with, it seemed, people donating two years' worth of books, there having been no Fair in 2020. The Church was full with an amazing collection of fiction, non-fiction and children's books – something for everyone.

A lot of hard work took place the week before - setting up, sorting and pricing all the books, all of which is time consuming. However, it was made easier by the volunteers who give of their time and energy throughout the week as well as at the weekend baking cakes, taking the money, serving refreshments and clearing up at the end. It goes without saying that we are very grateful to all the wonderful volunteers, without whom the whole event would not have been possible. Our thanks to you all for your efforts.

An additional opening on Friday this year saw more visitors and it was lovely to see the number of children who came after school on the Friday. There was plenty of browsing and buying over the three days, as well as enjoying tea, coffee and delicious homemade cakes served from the beautiful new Church kitchen. The event was a great success and we raised over £3700.00 for the Church Restoration Fund. Our thanks to all those who made purchases.

Despite the magnificent sales, we had plenty of books left over and as a result were again able to donate a large number of books to Wimpole Hall and the Garden House Hospice as well as to the Ashwell Book Swap in the Parish Rooms. We were then able to use an online market place for books to sell some of the left-over stock and raise more money – hence the magnificent total. The company Book Rescuers collected the rest and they will sell them on so that they can enjoy a new lease of life, as well as raising funds for libraries and their charity partner, The African Children's Education Trust, which gives thousands of young people in Africa a vital chance to get an education.

If anyone is interested in getting involved next year, please let us know, even if you can only spare a few hours here and there – we are always looking for new helpers. The 22nd Ashwell Book Weekend will be held on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd October 2022. Please make a note in your diary and start saving those books!

Karen Rogers ☎ 743338 and Teresa King

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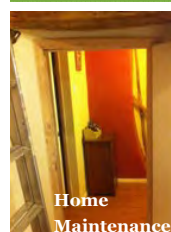
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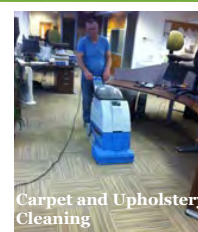
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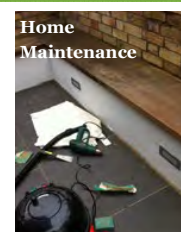
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Ashwell Show



It's Back! The Ashwell Show Returns for its 100th Birthday in 2022!

Each year the Ashwell Show provides a day of good old country family fun, with a horse show, dog show, birds of prey, vintage cars, tractors, crafts, food and shopping stands, and plenty of children-friendly attractions.

The field that plays host to the Show each year, courtesy of the Sheppard family, was certainly a lot quieter on the 2021 August bank holiday weekend compared to previous years, without the hustle and bustle of the fair and Scottie's tannoy announcements; but this is something the committee plans to rectify for 2022, to commemorate the 100th birthday of the Ashwell Show! Since its start in 1920 the Ashwell Show has been forced to 'miss a year' due to: war; hand-foot-and-mouth; dog flu, and of course the recent pandemic. Each time, the Show has returned bigger and better than ever before, and it is with that spirit that the committee is approaching the 2022 Ashwell Show.

Each year the Ashwell Show hands out around £10,000 to local societies, organisations, and good causes in the surrounding area. We know the past eighteen months have been especially difficult for these beneficiaries, and we are determined to put on a bumper show for 2022 so we can give generously to these great local causes once again.

Plans are already in place for what is shaping up to be a fantastic event. Headliners Extreme Bike Battle are due to wow the crowds with an exhilarating bike stunt show; and the amazing falconry display is also set to return; along with all the usual feel-good country show attractions.

Want to Join the Ashwell Show Committee?

Can you spare time to help on Show weekend? Can you help out with the planning? Contact Gemma, the Show Secretary. Whatever your skill, we can use it! Come and join in the fun and help to make 2022 a show to remember!

Gemma Allan, Show Secretary ✉ info@ashwellshow.co.uk



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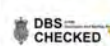
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St Mary's Christmas Fair



Given the situation in the country in 2020 and early 2021, it was something of a miracle that the Christmas Fair, a much-loved annual event at St Mary's, was able to go ahead. Provision was made for the stalls to be more widely spaced than before, and the doors were open to allow air to circulate. Masks were worn by shoppers and stallholders (when mulled wine or hot coffee was not being drunk!)

Tombolas for adults and children proved popular, as did the quiz and raffle. Silent auctions for a knitted nativity and painting took place and the gift stall and cake stall were busy. Outside the church, the Guides cooked hot bacon sandwiches and Ian Chandler played festive folk songs, both of these were a great way to welcome everyone.

Stalls selling crafts, bath salts, soap, knitted items, handmade gifts, gingerbread, beauty products, books, wooden items, and much more, provided something for everyone. An opportunity to buy vintage clothes and accessories was welcomed. The refreshment team were busy with hot drinks and mince pies and the church choir sang carols to add to the festive scene.

We also had lots of things for younger visitors to do, writing letters to Father Christmas, wrapping gifts, naming teddies and guessing the number of sweets in a jar.

Calendars, cards, and tea towels were also on sale, providing much needed funds for the Church.

Overall, it was a big team effort, but it was lovely to be able to offer local businesses, charities and makers a venue for the Fair, and it was great to have so much community support.

Thanks to all.

Sarah Talks, Churchwarden ✉ Sarah@sarahtalks.me

Ashwell Flea Market

Sadly, the famous Ashwell Flea Market, one of the highlights of the Ashwell calendar, did not take place in 2021.

As events such as these have to be planned in advance it was difficult to know if Covid restrictions would be lifted in time. Even with the gradual lifting of restrictions in March/April I could see no way of having a successful event whilst ensuring the safety of all our wonderful volunteers, as well as the buyers, and at the same time adhering to any Government guidelines.

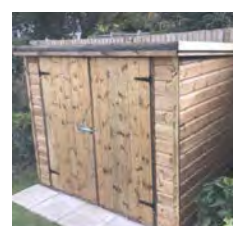
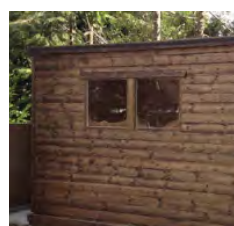
I know many of you will have been disappointed as it is such a popular event with the village and raises funds for the St Mary's Restoration Fund.

So, I look forward to seeing you all in 2022 when the Famous Flea Market will return on Saturday 5 March. See you all then.

Karen Rogers ☎ 743338



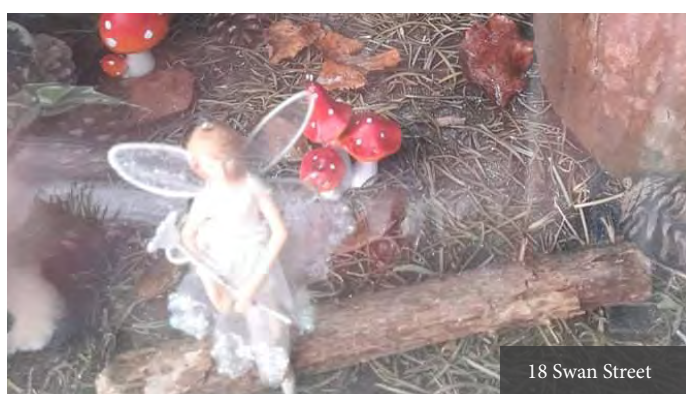
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Ashwell Overseers' Accounts



Photo of overseers account.

When it was first suggested that I might find the accounts of the Ashwell overseers of the poor interesting, I wondered what I was being led into and how accounts could possibly deepen my understanding of my parish. I was soon to learn that I was wrong and that accounts, especially those of the overseers of the poor, can provide insights into parish life not to be found elsewhere.

The office of the Overseer of the Poor was established by the Poor Law Act of 1597/8, was made compulsory by the Poor Relief Act of 1601 and carried on until 1925 although with less power after the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

From the accounts we get an idea of who was considered to be poor, although we know from other sources that the question as to who were the 'deserving poor' vexed them as much then as it does us today.

The poor were divided into two groups; those who were temporarily poor and needed relief to get over an immediate problem such as a man being temporarily off work after an accident and those who were too old or permanently unable to work. To cover these groups there were three types of payments: casual disbursement, pensions and, if there was a workhouse, which after 1727 a parish could have, payments for running the workhouse.

Pensions, a fixed amount, were paid weekly. A widow living on her own might get 2 shillings (10p) per week and two widows, who were sharing accommodation, get 1 shilling (5p) each. Addresses are not given so we do not know where they lived which could have been in their own or children's homes or parish almshouses.

The almshouses, which not surprisingly were in Alms Lane, were owned by the parish. So money was spent on their maintenance. An example is in 1707-8 £1 4s 0d (£1.20) was spent 'For making a new loft in an Almshouse: work and materials'.

Rent payments were common and in 1713-4 a total of £8 19s 8d (£8.99) was paid out. It would seem that it was cheaper to keep people in their own homes rather than providing accommodation.

The poor needed to be clothed. Shifts, stockings, gowns, shirts, a frock, a 'pity coate' and a 'bodys' together with shoes, new and being mended, were all paid for.

Some births and many deaths and some family activities in between, are recorded. A midwife paid for, children fostered, apprenticeships paid for, doctors and bonesetters sent for and sickness dealt with by local people. Death features prominently; the poor were looked after in their final days, the body laid out and prepared for burial and the burial costs met.

There are also interesting references which give a different glimpse into life at that time such as paying guides to take strangers to the next parish such as Bygrave, a reminder of the lack of maps and road signs at that time.

A rich source for stories about Ashwell.

David Short

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Ashwell Publications

David Short

In Print

- An Historical Atlas of Hertfordshire*, editor, Hertfordshire Publications, 2011
- Arthur Covington's Record of Ashwell Deaths 1877-1930*, editor, Ashwell Field Studies Centre, 1989
- Ashwell: an example of Anglo-Saxon town planning in A County of Small Towns*, Terry Slater and Nigel Goose eds., Hertfordshire Publications, 2008
- Ashwell Buildings and Antiquities 2nd edition*, Ashwell Education Services, 2021
- Ashwell Overseers' Accounts 1676-1722*, Hertfordshire Record Publications, 2021.
- Ashwell Walks*, Ashwell Education Services, 2002
- Pensions and the care of the elderly in Ashwell 1670 to 1770 in A Caring County – Social Welfare in Hertfordshire from 1600*, Steve King and Gillian Gear eds., Hertfordshire Publications, 2013
- Snippets of Ashwell's History Vol 2*, Ashwell Education Services, 2012

Forthcoming

- Ashwell Clergy*, Ashwell Education Services, 2022
- Vicars and Rectors of Ashwell* in Herts Past & Present No 39, 2022

Journals

- A Day to Remember in Ashwell*, in Hertfordshire Countryside, 1976
- Ashwell 917-2017 a report*, in Herts Past & Present No 31, 2018
- Merchant Taylors School at Ashwell, 1669-2001: the good, the bad and the absent*, in Herts Past and Present, No. 15 Spring 2010
- More Some sheep go on for ever*, in The Black Sheep, No 21, 2004
- Snippets of Ashwell History*, a monthly column in Ashwell News, 1992 - 1999
- Using population figures to tell a wider story: the population of Ashwell (Hertfordshire) over time*, in The Local Historian Volume 46 Number 2 April 2016

Out of print

- Ashwell, in Community Life in Hertfordshire - 2000*, Gillian Gear ed., Hertfordshire Association for Local History, 2001
- I was born in the High Street, wasn't I?* joint editor with Peter Greener, Ashwell Village Museum 1981
- Snippets of Ashwell's History Vol I*, Ashwell Education Services, 1997

Ashwell Yearbook Articles

- John Thomas: Ashwell School Master 1826 to 1862*, Ashwell Yearbook, 2021
- The Bill Family*, Ashwell Yearbook 2020.
- The Bryants of Ashwell*, Ashwell Yearbook 2017
- The Changing Population of Ashwell*, Ashwell Yearbook 2015
- The Planning and Creation of Ashwell*, Ashwell Yearbook 2016
- Vicars and Rectors of Ashwell*, Ashwell Yearbook, 2021
- Waldocks in Ashwell*, Ashwell Yearbook 2018.

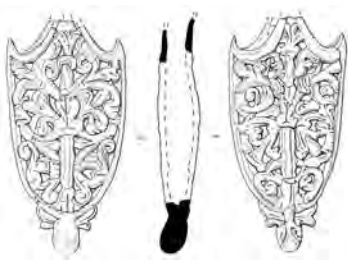
Archaeology around Ashwell Springhead

Around the springhead in Ashwell village, the main source of the river Rhee which flows north to become the Cam, finds of all periods from prehistoric to post-medieval have been unearthed, including very significant quantities of Neolithic and Bronze Age worked flints, Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon pottery, that may indicate the site of a religious shrine and high-status occupation (Burleigh 2020, 382-4). A Neolithic ritual henge monument lies about 300 m to the ESE of the springhead at around 65 m OD on the chalk escarpment, close to a group of five ring-ditches of ploughed-out late Neolithic/early Bronze Age burial mounds.

About 100 m south of the springhead on a meadow, Hunt's Close, at the foot of the chalk escarpment, Bronze Age flint-work, as well as Iron Age and Romano-British pottery suggest considerable activity in those periods. Finds continued into the Anglo-Saxon period, including potsherds and high-quality Middle and Late Saxon metalwork, metal detected finds in 1977 by Rod de Normann whose family lived at Ashwell House next door, such as decorated copper-alloy strap-ends (below)

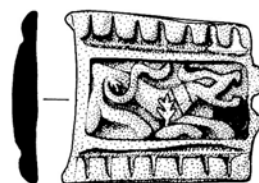


and a unique, elaborately decorated copper-alloy sword scabbard chape, each side depicting differing representations of the Tree of Life. One side might be intended to represent the Christian Tree of Life, perhaps the side with an animal head (a lamb?) peering from the foliage (below)



while the other could be the pagan World Tree (Yggdrasil – an Ash), associated with the pagan god, Odin (see below); possibly the owner was hedging his bets with the deities, as artefacts included in the Sutton Hoo and Prittlewell Saxon royal burials suggest may have been sometimes the case.

A contemporary gilded copper-alloy pendant also recovered depicts a snarling hunting hound, wearing a broad collar, standing behind a small tree-like symbol.



Very similar symbols are incised on the trunk of the Tree of Life on each side of the sword scabbard chape.

Occupation continued again into the Medieval period with finds of pottery and metalwork, including a lead-alloy pilgrim's flask for holy water (ampulla), decorated with a scallop shell design (associated with the shrine of St James of Compostela in Spain), and a copper-alloy pilgrim's badge, suggesting a religious aspect to the activity (North Hertfordshire Museum Accession Nos. 70 – 85 1978).

Metal detector finds in 2019 by David Pengelly have included a unique, inscribed and decorated silver-gilt handle from a Romano-British priest's ritual rattle, displaying the head of Neptune with a trident, a Celtic head and a human cranium (below)



similar in form to the copper-alloy one from the Barkway Roman temple treasure hoard (Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 67 & figs. 106-7 & 171); a Romano-British copper-alloy bird terminal, perhaps from a priest's sceptre; Roman coins, including one with a Minerva reverse, like those in the hoard ritually deposited in the Ashwell End ceremonial hollow



(Burleigh in Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 330); medieval coins, one of which is neatly folded in half, like the two folded together from the Ashwell End sacred site and a Medieval lead-alloy medallion, possibly displaying the crowned Christ the King. All these finds are concentrated on and around the features discussed in the following paragraphs and perhaps suggest a place held to be sacred over many centuries.

Incidentally, the above-mentioned Roman-British ritual rattle handle is currently the subject of a Coroner's Inquest to decide whether it is Treasure. If it is, Ashwell Village Museum hopes to acquire it for public display. It will need to be expertly conserved first, which will reveal much more detail of its inscription and decoration. It's hoped that all the finds from the excavations will eventually be placed in the village museum.

In March 2019 local volunteers, including some from the North Herts Archaeological Society, led by myself, began a programme of test excavation and surveys on Hunt's Close. Geophysical surveys, led by Kris Lockyear with volunteers from the Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, revealed a buried double-ditched enclosure containing a large hollow, and other ditches on the field; while hand-dug test pits uncovered a Medieval ditch and the terminus of a gully, both also containing residual Roman pottery and Prehistoric worked flints. Further hand-cut test trenches later in 2019 sectioned the outer and inner enclosure ditches, both dated to the Roman period by potsherds and a complete copper-alloy

bow-brooch, and the large hollow contained by the enclosure ditches (see image above).

The latter was shown to be a flat-bottomed sub-rectangular hollow, about 8.0m x 4.0m in plan, with vertical sides cut 0.70m into the natural chalk bedrock. It had post and stake-holes in the base on its inner edge and possible structured placed-deposits comprising animal bones, pottery, and stone objects. In one trench across the interior of the hollow, an organic soil layer, up to 0.70m deep, contained much charcoal, sometimes in streaks and patches, fragmentary animal bone, a complete boar's tusk, ovicaprid horn cores, residual Roman, and probable Saxon pottery, notably many rim sherds. At its base, on top of a surface of redeposited chalk, was a placed, structured deposit, about 0.30m across, comprising an ovicaprid mandible, a broken perforated stone weight, a polished sandstone pebble and a small hard chalk block, together with fragmentary animal bone and potsherds. Underneath the redeposited chalk layer was a thin deposit of organic soil, lying on the surface of the natural chalk bedrock, the horizontal base of the hollow. Directly under the position, two layers above, of the placed structured deposit was a pattern of seven stake-holes cut into the chalk base, perhaps the site of a small shrine.

A large probable post-pit, approximately 0.70m across and at least 1.0m deep cut through the base of the hollow, on the north side of its inner edge, possibly once holding a carved, painted and decorated totem pole, a tree trunk or maybe a whole tree - an Ash? Other apparent placed deposits

contained worked bone points, including three perforated large needles, one complete, and a complete small bone pin. Layers filling the hollow included organic soils, some containing much charcoal, alternating with re-deposited tamped chalk nodules, forming hard surfaces. They are dated by considerable quantities of probable Early-Middle Saxon potsherds, including many rim-sherds, although some residual Roman pottery was present also. During the life-time of the hollow, its edges had been significantly modified by deposits of very firmly tamped chalk rubble, making it hard to distinguish from the original undisturbed natural chalk edge and base. These tamped chalk surfaces are reminiscent of those associated with both the Ashwell End and Baldock sacred hollows (see below, and Burleigh in Jackson & Burleigh 2018).

The probable Anglo-Saxon artificially cut hollow may have been some kind of ceremonial place where religious rituals were performed inside the pre-existing Roman, possibly sacred, enclosure which may have contained a shrine or temple overlooking the springs. It has similarities, although it is much smaller, to the late Iron Age/Romano-British cut ceremonial hollow we excavated at Ashwell End, the site of the discovery of Senuna's temple treasure hoard (Jackson and Burleigh 2018). Similarities include a vertically cut edge and horizontal base, soils sealed by redeposited chalk layers (probable surfaces), notably one inside the perimeter of the hollow, placed structured deposits, and hints of possible feasting. The double-ditched enclosure has similarities also to the double-ditched enclosure containing the Iron Age and Romano-British temples at Hayling Island on the Hampshire-Sussex border. This enclosure also contained a series of ritual pits dated to the mid-Saxon period. It is possible that the ditched enclosure continued as a sacred site through the Saxon and Medieval periods, perhaps beyond, as the finds suggest.

Professors John Blair and Helena Hamerow of Oxford University, renowned academic experts in Anglo-Saxon archaeology and history, agree with my interpretation of the ceremonial hollow and consider it to be a new type of monument for the Anglo-Saxon period.

While we were carrying out our archaeological excavation in 2019, a planning application was submitted to the Local Authority to construct houses across the field. After we had completed our field investigation, the applicant employed a commercial archaeological company to machine excavate numerous trial trenches across the field. These confirmed our dating evidence for the features on the site. In 2020 planning permission was refused for a number of reasons, including the adverse impact any development would have on the setting of the Conservation Area and on views.

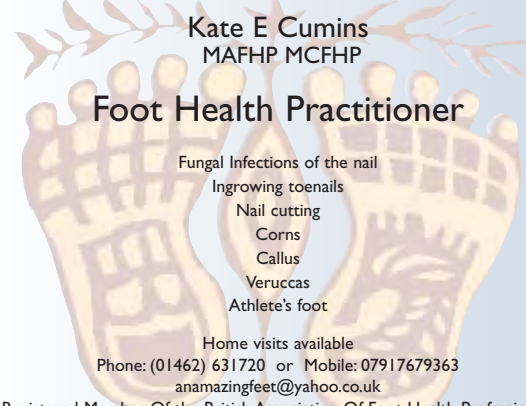
The place-name Aescewelle is first recorded c.1060 and means 'Ash well or spring'. A village folk tradition records that Ashwell Springs were associated with the pagan all-powerful god, Odin, whose sacred tree was the Ash (Yggdrasil – 'Odin's horse or gallows' - the World Tree – see above). The place-name Hodwell by the springhead is thought to mean 'Odin's well or spring'. We know from the Christian Anglo-Saxon historian Bede that the pagan Anglo-Saxons assembled at certain sacred places for the celebration of religious rites, and that springs or wells were among places venerated as sacred. The Ashwell spring water was believed to have mystic properties in the cure of diseases of the eye, and until the beginning of the 20th century, people came from far and near to take away bottles of the water for curative purposes. A few people do still today. It is known that until the middle of the 19th century an annual festival was held at the Springs, and old Ashwell and Baldock people made merry with wine and food. Here was evidence of an ancient custom being handed down perhaps from pagan ancestors with a feast by the springhead. Interestingly, since at least 1700, two small alehouses were sited at the springhead, replaced about 1799 by the extant Three Tuns public house.

Gilbert Burleigh PhD

Further Reading:

Burleigh, Gilbert R. 2020. 'Temples, treasures, heroic burials and deities: a sacred landscape bounding Iron Age and Romano-British Baldock', in *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity: Creation, Transformation, Manipulation* (ed. R. Häussler and G. F. Chial), 369-99, Oxford. <https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/sacred-landscapes.html...>

Jackson, Ralph and Burleigh, Gilbert 2018. *Dea Senuna: Treasure, Cult and Ritual at Ashwell, Hertfordshire*, British Museum Research Publication 194, London. This is now freely available on-line to read or download: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/research_publications_series.aspx



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We Will Remember



The Ashwell War Memorial was dedicated 100 years ago on 4th December 1921.

The centenary was acknowledged by an Act of Thanksgiving on 4th December 2021, the culmination of a year in which the research was completed for the following article.

How was the money to be raised?

Where was the War Memorial to be?

How long did it all take and who was the Architect?

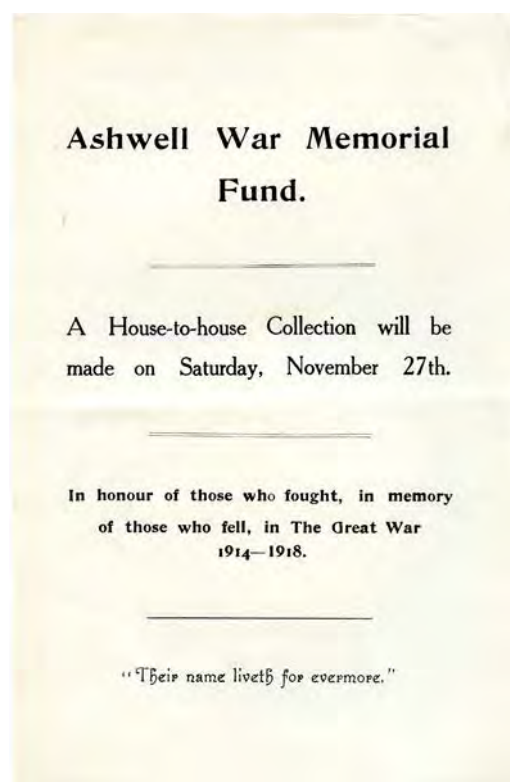
It is a fascinating story.

Looking at the entries in the Royston Crow we know that in 1919 there were discussions to decide where a Memorial should be. The Treaty of Versailles brought the official end to 'The Great War' in June 1919 and there was official encouragement for each community to build a War Memorial, to commemorate the local participation and sacrifice during the conflict.

Earlier, in April 1919, suggestions for a Memorial ranged from a cross or altar in the west end of the village, to a memorial in the Village Hall or at the Church lych gate. The following month the Vicar, Revd. S W P Webb, suggested a mortuary chapel on the new Burial Ground although many in the meeting were more in favour of the Village Hall as the memorial location.

Fund-raising started and there is a wonderful record in our Museum, listing more than 200 names of individuals who gave their 6d or a shilling – or more or less – to the fund, which finally totalled nearly £600. This included a donation from Mrs Phyllis Fordham, subsequent to her husband's death. The total cost would today be approximately £40,000.

In addition, a well-publicised collection was made in November 1920:



So, this was how the money was raised: both in lots of small donations and also in a house-to-house collection.

While the money was being raised it was agreed, at a Parish Council Meeting in January 1920, that the War Memorial should be located in the burial ground:

By January 1921, although nearly £600 had been raised, there was concern by villagers at the burial ground location – great unpopularity is recorded. An official from Ashwell Rural District Council was very much in favour of the new burial ground site whilst villagers were not, so the site on the corner of the Recreation Ground was finally agreed. In our Museum there are the plans for the steps that were needed in this revised location.

So now we know where the War Memorial was to be.

By way of preparation, in June 1920, a list of names to be inscribed on a War Memorial was available in the Post Office, to check for mistakes or omissions.

As we've already seen, various options were discussed both in the War Memorial Committee - cross, obelisk, or War Stone - and also amongst villagers. However, the design known as a Lutyens cross by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), was approved by six to one in the War Memorial Committee held in January 1920, and then endorsed by a public meeting. Ashwell shares this design with a number of English villages, the Irish National War Memorial in Dublin and for the new burial ground plan in 1916.

This means that our Memorial was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, one of the greatest British architects, who was also responsible for the Cenotaph in Whitehall, and numerous Memorials across the Western Front for the then Imperial War Graves Commission.

During construction, Wolverley Attwood Fordham, who was chair of the War Memorial Committee died and Lutyens designed his memorial in the village burial ground.

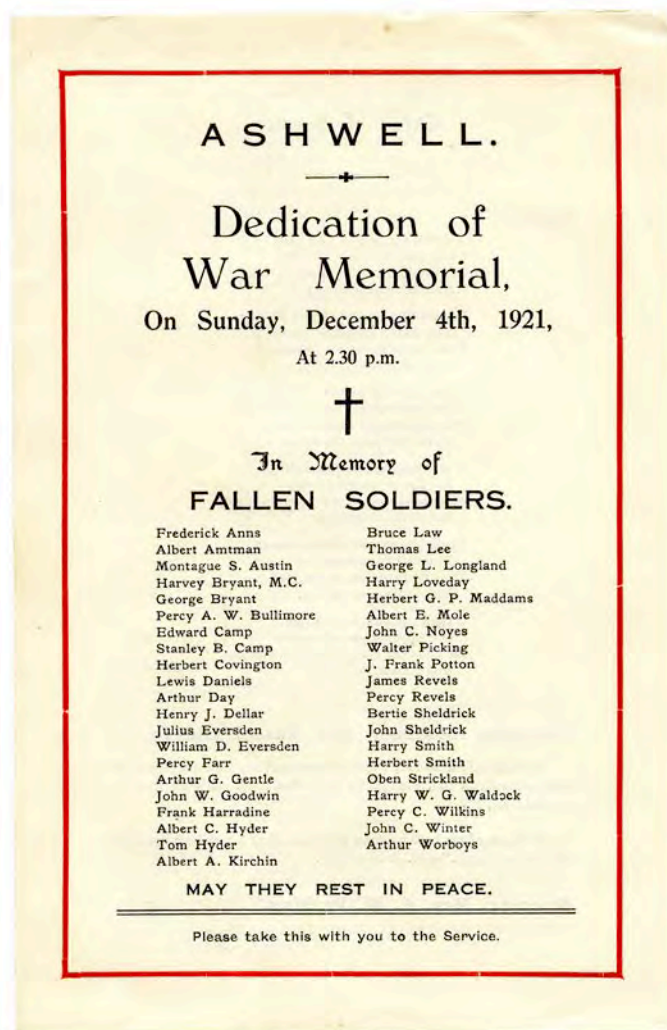
The village War Memorial cross, 22ft high, of Portland Limestone, was built by Messrs Holland, Hannen and Cubitt Ltd, the contractors for the Cenotaph in Whitehall and on 4th November the work was Inspected by Sir Edwin Lutyens, who approved work to date and made suggestions for improvements.

The War memorial was unveiled by Lord Hampden, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, on 4 December 1921.

Also present was Sir Herbert Fordham, High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridge and Huntingdon, a Justice of the Peace, and Chairman of Cambridge County Council.

Albert Sheldrick records that, "As the church clock struck half past two, Sir Herbert arrived resplendent in his plumed hat... sword clanking at his side. He had ridden down from his estate at Odsey on his favourite steed, his Sunbeam bicycle."

And so, the dedication took place at 2:30 pm on 4th December 1921.



Andrew Gillborn

✉ andrewgillborn@btopenworld.com

The Ashwell Branch of the Royal British Legion offer their grateful thanks to Mr Andrew Gillborn for compiling this article, also available from Andrew as a booklet. Also, to Dr Mervyn Miller of the Lutyens Trust and to Ashwell Museum Curator, Mr Peter Greener, for their kind assistance.



Thiepval Memorial.

Sir Edwin Lutyens' War Memorials

On 4th December 2021 we commemorated the centenary of the Dedication of the Ashwell War Memorial: its architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) also designed The Cenotaph in Whitehall. Below, I summarise the broader context of his memorial projects.

The 'Great War' erupted in August 1914: Britain and France had refused to accept Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium. Expectation of a decisive campaign by a standing army under Field Marshall Sir Douglas (later Earl) Haig was shattered. Mounting casualties on the Somme (and around Ypres in Belgium) were beyond comprehension as a war of attrition sacrificed thousands of lives for minimal advances. Trenches scarred a landscape, over remnants of farms and woodland. Removal, identification of and temporary burial of bodies created logistical and moral problems.

Sir Fabian Ware (also 1869-1944) a capable and humane administrator, grasped the hazardous problem of clearing the bodies, initially working with the Red Cross. 'Temporary' battlefield cemeteries resulted, burials marked by wooden crosses, inscribed with the names of the dead, whenever possible. The War Office recognised Ware's 'War Graves Registration Committee' in March 1915. On 21st May 1917 the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission was founded by the Royal Proclamation of Edward Prince of Wales (himself on active service) who became President, with Ware as Vice-Chairman.

Three Principal Architects were appointed; in addition to Lutyens, Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942) and Sir Herbert Baker (1862-1946). In July 1917 Lutyens and Baker arrived on to the Western Front to provide architectural advice.

Lutyens was appalled. Writing to his wife, he maintained that only a 'solid ball of bronze' could encapsulate the magnitude of sacrifice; but he also observed the growth of wild poppies on the battlefields. He designed a meticulously proportioned 'Great War Stone' to be placed in every cemetery, almost a secular altar, inscribed with a text from Ecclesiasticus, 'THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE', chosen by Rudyard Kipling. Ware, sharing Lutyens' humanist outlook, and the equality wrought by death, obtained approval for this in 1918. Blomfield's 'Cross of Sacrifice', bearing a sword fixed against its masonry also became an essential inclusion.

In 1920 construction of permanent cemeteries on the Western Front commenced. Hope that a 'standard' layout might be used was dashed by circumstances. Planting plans by Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1942) symbolised homecoming for thousands of casualties, identified or not, on rows of gravestones of equal size (not a Lutyens design) with no differentiation of rank. Junior Architects (who had survived active service) were in charge of the smaller cemeteries. All cemeteries contain a book of burials to assist visitors to locate an individual grave.

The climax of Lutyens' memorials was the sublime geometry of the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing (1927-32) where interlocked arches rose stepwise to a crowning centre. Low down, the flanks were faced by panels inscribed with the names of 73,357 men active on the Somme, missing presumed dead. Below, there were also cemeteries of British and French forces. The Memorial was dedicated by Edward, Prince of Wales on 1st August 1932. It is now the location of a major Commonwealth War Memorial Commission Visitor Centre.

My casework for the fledgling Lutyens Trust included the restoration of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens (INWMG). 49,400 Irish soldiers were killed in action out of 206,000 enlisted. Preparation continued after partition in 1921 under the Irish Free State. A 60-acre (22ha) site at Islandbridge, on the south bank of the River Liffey, opposite Phoenix Park was acquired. In 1930 Lutyens was appointed. His layout included four book rooms in two pairs, linked by pergolas, and two circular sunken rose gardens. The central greensward had a cross axis at mid-point, with a Great War Stone, above which soared a fifty-foot high Lutyens cross. Wicklow granite throughout was skilfully wrought by an army of unemployed, using handcraft wherever

Irish Veteran



possible. President Eamon de Valera had supported the scheme, but the dedication, set for August 1939 was inevitably postponed.

The Memorial lay neglected during World War II when Eire was neutral. From the 1950s to 1980s vandalism by travellers and pollution with Dublin Corporation waste, scandalised conservation societies.

In the mid-1980s the Irish Office of Public Works (OPW) requested a Lutyens Trust visit, followed by a progress meeting, and lunch at the Dublin Royal British Legion HQ, presided over by the OPW Minister. I commended the work on behalf of The Lutyens Trust, knowing that the supervising architect had 'lost' a few craftsmen from the restoration of Dublin Castle without Ministerial assent, to press on at Islandbridge. All was well.

On 10th September 1988, I returned to attend the Dedication of the Memorial Gardens, met a few hardy veterans, witnessed a small IRA demonstration, and admired the thoroughness of the restoration.

Dr Mervyn Miller, Trustee of The Lutyens Trust

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ASHWELL WEATHER

Ashwell Weather in 2021

In short, gloomy. Not quite the gloomiest year in recent memory, but we had only 1198 sunshine hours, compared with an average of 1369. Only 1996 was worse, and that by only two hours' worth of sunshine.

The weather data for 2021 in Ashwell are given in two tables: one for the rainfall, temperature extremes and sunshine, and a second table showing monthly average high and low temperature values for 2021 and typical values over previous years for comparison.

These show that 2021 was not a year for those who like sunshine and warmth; but despite the excess cloud, the rainfall for the year was below normal. The year was also cooler than usual, especially in August when it mattered most.

The year started cold and cloudy, with January's sunshine only about two-thirds of the average. It was also cold, with temperatures 1 -2 °C below average, but not very damp. February was a little better, with near normal temperatures and a bit more sun.

Spring was notable for being cold. March was about average, but for April and May the temperatures were typically 3° below normal, which didn't help the gardeners among us.

March and May were very overcast, with a reasonable amount of rainfall in May particularly, but (happily) April was unusually sunny and exceptionally dry, with 1.8mm of rainfall. Only April 2007, with a mere 0.75mm, was drier, and that was a record rainfall low for any month since 1976. Even the air was dry, with a humidity low of 28% on 5th April and an average daily low of 46%. This compares with about 60% typical of the rest of the spring and summer.

Autumn began warmer than usual, with temperatures in September about 2° above normal, and normal sunshine. It didn't even rain often, and most of the 58mm of rainfall came in just two days – 31.7mm on the 14th and 17.6mm on the 28th. October was also warm, if a bit wetter and cloudier. November was the driest since Ashwell records began with Peter Bryant in 1976. It was also sunnier than usual and, amazingly, recorded more sunshine hours than August! This despite the fact that the sun is above the horizon for about 450 hours in August and only 260 hours in November. The average temperature was about normal.

December gave us lots of cloud, yet not much rain, despite having measurable rainfall for 23 days out of the 31. The average temperatures were about normal, though the year did end on a high: a temperature of 15.3 °C was recorded on 30th December!

Bob Carswell

Table 1												
2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall (mm)	65.0	27.9	25.8	1.8	60.6	56.0	48.8	25.0	58.0	79.2	8.8	41.6
Average rainfall 1976-2018 (mm)	53.1	38.4	41.3	47.9	51.9	54.2	53.1	53.2	49.8	63.0	58.3	54.3
Days with rain	23	13	16	3	19	16	18	18	9	18	10	23
Max. temp. °C	11.9	16.7	22.1	18.0	24.0	28.2	30.5	24.4	29.5	20.5	15.7	15.3
Min. temp.	-3.5	-3.8	-0.5	-1.6	2.4	7.5	10.6	10.7	7.6	5.8	-2.1	-0.4
Days with min 0°C or below	11	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Sunshine hours (Cambridge)	42.1	66.8	75.0	195.0	117.6	148.1	139.2	81.9	130.7	88.1	87.2	26.0
Average sunshine hours 1996-2020 (Cambridge)	59.1	78.8	106.7	136.8	163.6	160.0	160.2	143.4	128.5	100.1	70.9	60.7

Table 2												
2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Month avg. max °C	5.6	8.2	10.8	12.4	15.3	21.1	23.2	20.5	20.8	15.6	10.2	8.9
Month avg. min °C	1.3	2.9	4.5	2.7	7.3	13.2	14.5	13.6	13.2	9.8	5.2	5.1
Av max °C 2014-20	7.4	8.6	11.2	15.2	18.7	21.3	23.2	21.8	18.9	14.5	10.3	8.9
Av min °C 2014-20	2.5	2.7	4.3	5.8	9.1	12.2	14.5	13.9	11.6	8.9	5.5	4.6

GALLERY

Images by Greg Campbell and Margaret Budgen except where stated.



Christine Schwick at the AFAC stall at the church fair.



Festive Welcome to the Christmas Fair.



Rollys Lane by Henri Sheldrick.



January snowman in Angells Meadow.



Moving the muck by floodlight in December.



Woodforde Close carols.



Queueing outside Days the Bakers.



Social distancing on country walks in January and the Community Spirit.



Queueing outside Crumps the Butchers.



Bear with us.



Margaret Gilliam thanks Mary Gray for hosting one of the Horticultural Society's summer gatherings.



Who are our mystery Yarnbombers? The first yarnbombing.



The Easter yarnbombing.



The Christmas yarnbombing.



Construction on Claybush Hill.



Double yellow lining in Gardiners Lane.



Beautiful Christmas lights.



Ken Hollow entertains Hort members in the Giliams' garden.

THOSE WE
HAVE LOST



Alan White (1929 – 2021)



Alan was born in Maidstone, Kent in 1929 and had fond memories of long bike rides through the Kent countryside and summers hop picking to earn pocket money. He went to Maidstone Grammar School and it was there he began playing rugby.

He went to Loughborough University to study mechanical engineering, gaining the skills that he put to practical use for the rest of his life and continuing to play rugby until injury forced him to give up. He also played badminton for the university and later returned to playing in Ashwell, at the barn in Gardiners Lane.

Following his national service, he began work for English Electric Aviation, now BAE Systems, in their logistics division, and he remained with them throughout his working life until he was forced to take early retirement through ill health in 1982. Alan enjoyed many aspects of his work but particularly his trips to Australia and the States, and the time he spent on Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides.

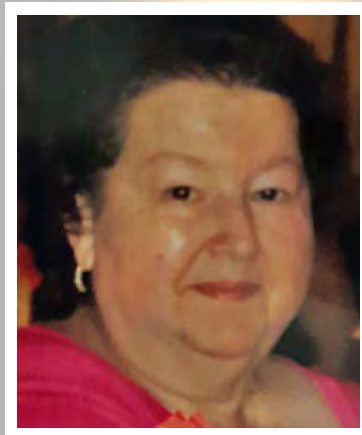
Alan met Rosemary when they both worked for English Electric Aviation. Shortly after they were married in September 1959 they moved to Ashwell, buying a house in Station Road, where they thought they might stay for a few years. They had three children, gradually got drawn into village life and celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary in 2019, still living at the same address.

In the 1970s Alan was a Parish Councillor and Chairman of the PTA, helping to raise funds for the swimming pool at Ashwell School, where hundreds of children subsequently learned to swim. He was grateful that at the opening ceremony they decided to throw the new headmaster, John Bushell, into the pool instead of him. He was always happy to help with any practical task, whether that was painting the recreation ground pavilion or the Parish Room or helping with the Ashwell Show or village sports day.

After retiring, Alan spent many happy hours pottering about in his workshop and garden, which gave him great joy. But over time his early rugby playing took its toll and he struggled to get about. He was determined not to be defeated and initially used his ride-on lawnmower to get around the garden, before upgrading to a series of ever more robust mobility scooters. Even in the last couple of years he occasionally took the latest, a scooter almost the size of a small car, down into the village to go to the Post Office or chemist.

As an engineer Alan always had a practical suggestion for any of those annoying things that need fixing and his love and advice is missed by all the family. He is survived by Rosemary and their three children: Steve, Andrew and Hilary.

Rosemary Glover (1952-2021)



Rosemary (known as Rosie) was born at home in Silver Street, Ashwell on 3rd August 1952. She was the third of four sisters born to William and Kathleen Mander.

Rosie attended Ashwell Primary School and then went on to attend Royston Secondary School. She also attended Brownies and when she was older she went to the village Youth Club too.

It was at Ashwell Youth Club that she met her future husband, John Glover. She was fifteen and loved to go to dances. At this time Rosie had left school and started working at Spirella in Letchworth as a seamstress. When Rosie turned sixteen she went to work for Irvin's where she strung parachutes and it was at this time that she and John got engaged.

Rosie and John married at St Mary's Church in Ashwell on 20th March 1971 when Rosie was eighteen. Rosie continued working at Irvin's until she was nineteen and then she gave up work to be a housewife and later on a mother.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

Rosie and John had Mark, the first of their two sons, in 1974, while they were still living with Rosie's family in Silver Street. In 1976 they moved into what would be their permanent family home in Station Road, Ashwell. Two years later in 1978 they had their second son, Carl.

Their home was a happy home and Rosie loved being a mother and was always happy for Mark and Carl to have their friends round to the house. The boys had a lovely relationship with both their parents. Rosie enjoyed regular camping and caravanning holidays, not only with John, Mark and Carl, but with other families too.

Once Mark and Carl had grown up, Rosie became a doting grandmother to her two grandsons, Aaron and Dean. She loved spending time with the boys and would decorate her kitchen with the art and craft work that they had done together.

Later, when John retired, Rosie again enjoyed caravanning. Rosie loved nature and animals - she enjoyed her garden and feeding and watching the birds. She loved to go out in the car, deer watching, and she liked to collect all kinds of ornaments, especially dogs and deer. She loved doing jigsaw puzzles, many of which John has made into beautiful tables and pictures.

Rosie will be greatly missed by everyone whose lives she has touched.

Martin Henry Lush (1937-2021)



Martin was born in Ealing on 27th May 1937, the only child of Roland and Norah Lush. During the war he was evacuated with his mum to a farm with family connections. This may have influenced his decision to make his career in agriculture – quite unusual for a boy from the suburbs where most went into accountancy, insurance or the law!

After attending Ealing Grammar School, Martin applied to take an NDA (National Diploma of Agriculture) course at Shuttleworth College, Old Warden. There he met Carolyn, a Biggleswade girl, and became friends with fellow student Peter Eldridge. Martin and Carolyn married on 3rd June 1961 and Peter was his best man. In due course, a son, Andrew, and daughter, Jenny, arrived on the scene – a pigeon pair who brought much happiness to their parents.

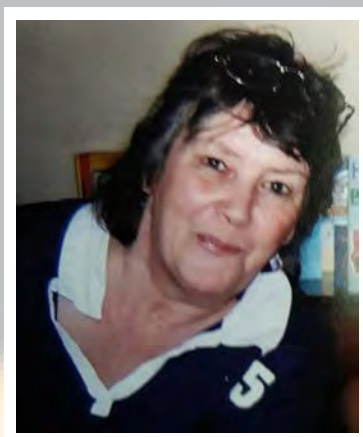
Unfortunately, Martin injured his back working on a farm and he decided to study for a Certificate of Education to become a lecturer in agriculture: not so much practical, physical work. He was employed by Kesteven Agricultural College, Lincolnshire in 1966, initially with responsibility for their sheep flock, the one animal with which he had no practical experience! Experience was soon gained and he grew to love teaching his students about them. He remained at the College, later part of Lincolnshire Agricultural College, in various roles, until his retirement in 1997. During this time, he joined Grantham Lions Club and was elected President in 1984/85.

In 1999, he and Carolyn moved to Ashwell to be nearer Jenny and Andy, with their children, Matt and Sophie, in Hitchin. It was also nearer to Heathrow, from where they used to go to see Andrew, wife Pat and children Gillian and Edward, who had recently emigrated to Canada. By happy chance, they bought a cottage in Springhead, a lovely spot. Martin took a great interest in the Springs, just over the road, organising work parties to keep things looking as they should.

Martin liked to be busy and volunteered for the RSPB (Royal Society for Protection of Birds) at Fowlmere, with the National Trust as a Farm Guide at Wimpole and as a Chaplaincy Visitor at the Lister Hospital. He did a stint as Health and Safety Officer at Church, helped as a volunteer at Ashwell Museum and joined the Ashwell Photo Club, where he made several friends.

About seven years ago, Martin was diagnosed with Parkinson's, which gradually took over his life, culminating in a series of falls, admission to hospital and passing away soon after. He was much loved and will be greatly missed as a loving, caring husband, dad, father-in-law, grandpa and great-grandpa to little Alex, and by many friends, both locally and far and wide.

Janet Bonnet (1948 – 2021)



Janet was born on 12th November 1948 in Baldock where she spent many happy childhood days. She had one brother, David, who sadly passed away just a few weeks after Janet. Their parents' names were Miriam and Arthur Chadbourne, which is why Janet was also known as Chad. Her friend published a book which mentioned her friend Chad as she used to call Janet by that name.

Janet met Brian at The Three Tuns pub at the age of twenty. They lived in Ashwell for all their married life and had three 'March born' children: Catherine born on 1st March 1971, Sarah born on 4th March 1972 and Sam born on 19th March 1977, her only son with whom Janet was very close. Janet's family continued to grow with the arrival of five grandchildren – Lewis, William, Christian, Maggie and Doyle.

Janet was an excellent mum and grandmother as she loved children and was a unique character. She liked to attend events but preferred to keep herself in the background.

Janet was a nanny/childminder and a helper at Ashwell School, looking after a girl called Beckie who she loved very much.

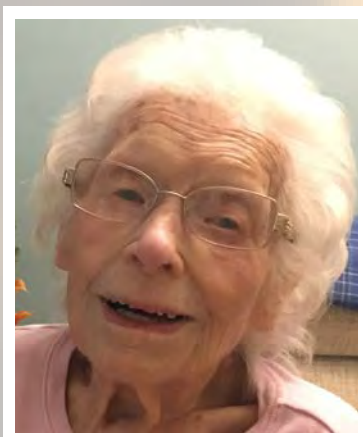
Janet enjoyed visiting Catherine and the grandchildren in America as often as her health allowed and enjoyed going to church while over there and seeing Pastor Monica who was her favourite minister (apart from Fred Sillence of course). Janet kept her favourite reading by Pastor Monica, 'Footprints in the Sand'.

Janet loved daffodils and Catherine has them all around her house. Janet also loved irises and often made Sarah and Catherine stop the car so that she could pinch a clipping or two from the plants she saw on the trip. Catherine now has a beautiful iris plant in America which Janet helped her acquire in this way.

A cherished memory of Janet (and of course Lewis) is a visit to America one spring. It was chilly enough in the evenings to require heat, so nanny and Lewis set about lighting a fire in the hearth...a large one...a VERY large one; so enormous, in fact, that it required three fire engines worth of firemen to come and put it out (despite Sarah's valiant attempts with a saucepan and a tap). Nanny and Lewis were the brunt of 'Gonna start a fire tonight?' jokes for the remainder of the trip and any subsequent ones. Poor Lewis will probably get to hear them for many years to come.

Janet passed away peacefully at home and only required minimal pain relief, which was a blessing. She was a quiet, private and unique lady. She will be held so fondly in the hearts of everyone who knew her, sorely missed and never forgotten.

Nellie Floyd (1925-2021)



Nellie was born on 4th June 1925 in Plaistow, East London, to May and Charlie Dodd, the youngest of their three children. The family grew up in nearby Canning Town where Nellie enjoyed a happy childhood. The outbreak of war dashed Nellie's wish to become a dressmaker. Instead, she worked alongside her father at Browning's, a vital engineering factory. Here, she met her future husband, Bill, and their romance blossomed. They married in 1949 and bought their first home at Ilford in 1955.

Family life started in earnest with the arrival of Graham in 1951, followed by Richard in 1955. This was a busy, but happy time. Nellie was the homemaker, supporting Bill in his busy engineering career, while ensuring all her men were sent out fed, watered, and dressed in clean clothes! Nellie and Bill enjoyed an active social life with neighbours at Ilford and relaxed on boating holidays and weekends on the Norfolk Broads.

The couple moved to Ashwell in 1986, and this was to be their home until 2018. Nellie made friends in the village and was happy to be near Richard, Chantal and their daughters, Stephanie and Gabriella.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

She joined the Ashwell WI where, as a fellow member recently noted, she was known as 'a great doer and helper'. During this time, Nellie made friends with her neighbour, Marion Sims, who was to become her stalwart, lifelong companion.

After their move, Nellie and Bill remained active, enjoying social life in the village and trips to visit friends and family abroad. In later years, they often holidayed with Pam and Graham at their house in France.

Parkinson's disease took over the last years of Nellie's life, limiting her movement and range of activities, and finally confining her to a wheelchair. Nellie bore these difficulties with great courage and stoicism, rarely complaining and always more concerned for others. Throughout, despite his own failing health, Bill ensured that Nellie received all the care and support she needed.

The couple moved into care at Pinelodge Care Home, Stevenage, after Christmas 2017, but Bill died very soon after – a dreadful blow. Nevertheless, Nellie rallied and settled in with support and care from the staff, family, and friends. In 2019 she became a great-grandmother when Stephanie and Matt's son, Sam, was born. Sam's regular visits were a source of great happiness.

Nellie's final year, with visiting restricted, was hard although the family and Marion resumed limited visiting in the final weeks. Nellie passed away peacefully, after a short illness, in the care of the wonderful staff at Lister Hospital AMU, on 29th May 2021. Her family will remember Nellie with great affection as a loving and caring mother who brightened everybody's day.

Gwendoline Freeman (1915 – 2021)



Gwen was born on 14th September 1915 at Place Farm, Hinxworth. She spent her childhood in Hinxworth and attended the local school in the village. Her future husband, Harry, also attended the school.

After school Gwen worked in service at Witham, Essex. At weekends she was allowed to use the family's car to travel home to court Harry. They married in 1940 and lived first in Dunton, then in Edworth. During the war she cared for two evacuees, one who now lives in north London, the other in Canada. The couple moved back to Hinxworth in the late 1940s, first to Chapel Street, then to Francis Road.

Gwen had three children, Martin, Roger, and Raymond. Martin now lives in Australia with his family and Roger in west Wales. Sadly, Harry, her husband, and Raymond both passed away in the mid-80s.

At Hinxworth Gwen was a keen member of the Women's Institute and helped with the cricket club teas for many years. In summer time she helped her brother with the harvest at Place Farm. Gwen and Harry visited Australia, first in 1978, visiting family, friends, and sight-seeing. They went five or six times in total, the last occasion being for her 90th birthday in 2005.

Gwen moved to Wolverley House, Ashwell in the mid-1990s and lived there for nearly 30 years. She did not have many hobbies, but knitting, reading and crochet came to the fore. She had many good friends and companions and loved bingo in Wolverley House and especially the minibus trips and day outings. She has always been a joiner so she made the most of the activities there. As her friend Mary remarked, "If there was a coach trip Gwen would say 'If you go, I'll go.'" Then off they would go to Peterborough, Eastbourne or wherever. Right until lockdown she would make her weekly visit to the Post Office with Keith. Gwen had a deep, quiet faith and attended church regularly.

In 2015 Gwen celebrated her 100th birthday with friends and family at Wolverley House. She moved to Providence Court in Baldock in the spring of 2021 and there she passed away peacefully on 11th August 2021, aged 105. Gwen was buried, in her wedding dress, next to her husband Harry. Gwen never took anything for granted, never judged or spoke an unkind word and was always ready to help others. She was the best of us and brought out the best in us.

Ruth West (1939 – 2021)



Ruth West was born in May 1939, the first child of Austin, an accountant, and Barbara Hesmondhalgh from Yorkshire. They moved to Birmingham in the depression of the 1930s for Austin to work in an engineering company, a reserved occupation during the war. They lived in Worcestershire, where Ruth was joined by a sister in 1942 and a brother in 1946. They had a happy childhood there until, owing to her father's change of career into farming, they moved to Wiltshire where Ruth's beauty caused quite a stir amongst the Young Farmers!

Ruth became a secretary in London in the late 1950s and always kept in touch with friends and colleagues from those days. She married Bryan Janson-Smith, an ex- submariner and they too moved to Birmingham for his work in Human Resources. She worked for the Literary Editor of the Birmingham Post and most successfully modelled for their fashion pages. She was also their restaurant critic, sometimes landing the paper in trouble with her frank reviews! All her life she was a keen and accomplished cook, from which we all benefited.

Ruth did voluntary work for the Probation Service. Working with ex-offenders became a life-long passion. She kept in contact with one family all her life. She trained and worked as a couples therapist with Relate and, when she and Bryan moved to Bedford, she became a magistrate, eventually Chair of the Youth Bench and the Board of Independent Monitors at Wellingborough prison. She served both organisations with distinction until she had to retire. Even Ruth had to acknowledge the passing of the years.

Despite all the love, Ruth's life was marred by tragedy as, sadly, she and Bryan had no children. But she turned this sadness into caring for others and so many of us have benefited.

Bryan's sudden death in a terrible accident was, of course, a desperate blow. However, Ruth, being Ruth, picked herself up and married Christopher West and acquired a new family to whom she was devoted. How unfair therefore that Christopher became so ill. But Ruth, steadfastly, determinedly and with great devotion, cared for him. Proof, if ever it was needed, of Ruth's capacity for love.

Ruth had great beauty, elegance and style, was very artistic, an accomplished painter and a keen and knowledgeable gardener, as could be seen in her much-admired garden. Able and intellectually curious, she was an enthusiastic member of the reading and poetry groups in Ashwell. She maintained a strong interest in social justice and was a children's reader at Ashwell Primary School.

Ruth's early and unexpected death, aged 82 in August 2021, has left a huge void in many lives. She is much missed.

Olive Bird (1929 – 2020) and Margaret Pawson (1933 – 2021)



Sisters Olive and Margaret were born in Mayfield Essex, to parents Grace and Charles Hill. Olive was born on 18th February 1929. Margaret was born on 27th January 1933.

They grew up together and lived as neighbours, even in their final few years at Wolverley House in Ashwell, the village where they both brought up their children. Not many days went by when they didn't see each other to have a good natter over a cuppa.

After spending the first few years of their childhood in Mayfield they moved around with their parents while their father looked for work on the farms.

When Olive met her husband Morris they moved to Back Street in Ashwell where they spent all their married years. Olive loved her garden and enjoyed village life.

She was Nanny B to her grand-daughter and two lovely great-grandsons. She played a big part in her nieces' and nephews' lives, who affectionately called her Auntie O.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

She worked hard and had many jobs, including working at Ashwell Surgery for many years where she was highly thought of by the doctors and other staff members. Olive loved to holiday in Eastbourne with Morris, and later with Margaret, where they liked to visit old haunts and childhood friends. Olive will always be remembered for her soft and gentle nature.

Margaret met Ken at Royston Town Hall in the early 1950s. Margaret and Ken enjoyed more than 50 years of happiness together, watching their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow and flourish. Margaret enjoyed many things, including knitting and sewing for her family, and was keen on doing a crossword in the daily newspaper.

Margaret had many jobs, including working in the fields, pea picking and potato picking, sometimes taking all of her children with her; she always worked hard to help provide for her family.

Margaret had a reputation for being the life and soul of a party and would often be the first to start jigging or singing a rendition of a favourite song. She will be remembered for being incredibly strong, loving and selfless.

Kathleen May Mander - 'Kath' (1928 – 2021)



Kath was born in Ashwell on 4th February 1928, the only child of Dorothy and Arthur Law. She lived in Ashwell for her entire life. Growing up, she attended Ashwell Merchant Taylors School.

On leaving school Kath went on to work at the Co-op, which was located in Ashwell High Street. As part of her job, she would drive the delivery van and would deliver groceries around Ashwell and the surrounding villages.

It was while doing these deliveries that she met her future husband, William Mander (known as Bill), who was a farm worker from Newnham. After marrying, they moved into a house in Silver Street, which is where they lived for their entire married life and had their children. They had four daughters – Jenny, Maureen, Rosie and Pam.

Kath returned to work as soon as her daughters were old enough to attend school and worked at the village newsagents 'Christy's' until the time of its permanent closure. After the closure of the newsagents she went on to work at 'Irving's' parachute manufacturer, located in Ashwell at the time, which is where she worked for several years. It was during this time that Bill sadly passed away and Kath then moved into her house in Station Road.

By this time Kath had six grandchildren – Gary, Wayne, Mark, Carl, Tracy and Gavin. She was a doting grandmother and loved to knit for her grandchildren and spend time with them, both at home and on outings and holidays. Kath later had four great grandchildren – Charlotte, Robbie, Aaron and Dean who she was extremely proud of. She would often talk about them and cherished pictures of them.

Kath also enjoyed many hobbies such as gardening and reading, and loved to visit garden centres. When Kath could no longer manage these activities owing to ill health, she turned her attention to her jigsaw puzzles.

Kath was a very well-known figure in the community of Ashwell in her youth, having been born in the village and grown up here. She was a loving and caring mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who is missed so very much by everyone whose lives she has touched

Eleanor Bryant (1935-2021)



Eleanor Marina May was born in Newnham on 17th August 1935, to Eleanor and Harrold. They were overwhelmed with their beautiful daughter, born into a family of four sons. It was a traumatic breech birth but both Eleanors were fine. Growing up in their small three-bedroom home was fun but cramped for a large family.

Eleanor had a happy upbringing and attended the small Newnham village school, Merchant Taylors School in Ashwell and then Knights Templar School. When she was about ten she had her first encounter with a young boy called Fred, a friend of her brother, Peter. Fred noticed Eleanor as a pretty young girl. When Eleanor left school she worked at Spirella and later at Irvings, later still at ICL.

At 21 Eleanor met a handsome young 22-year-old man, whom she began dating. He turned out to be the same Fred she had met when she was ten. He had just been demobbed from the army and couldn't believe this was the pretty girl he had met years previously. After an eighteen-month courtship they were married at St Mary's, Ashwell on 1st February 1958. Their first home together

was Eleanor's birthplace in Newnham.

They moved into a flat in Ashwell after eight-and-a-half years and stayed there for four years. The flat became too small when their first and only beautiful daughter, Bridget Anna, was born. She was their whole world. Eleanor and Fred then moved to their first proper family house in Station Road, which is still the family home after 50 years.

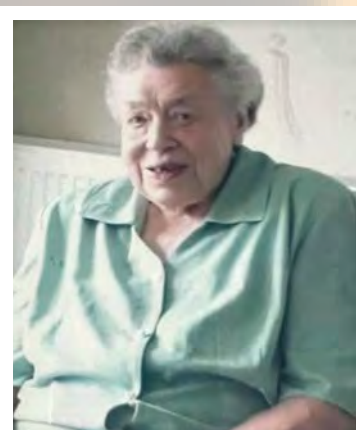
Eleanor enjoyed being a full-time mother for many years. They enjoyed many a happy holiday on the north Norfolk coast, along with Bob, the family dog.

Bridget moved out to marry Paul O'Neil when she was 25 and soon they had their children, Ellie and Keiran. Eleanor and Fred were ecstatic when they became grandparents. They were very much involved with the children and loved every minute.

Eleanor was always an active member of her church and had great faith all her life. She was a non-drinking, kind, caring, church-going lady. Her beliefs were strong and she enjoyed hymns and songs of praise. She also enjoyed helping at charity events, baking cakes for the WI and the Mothers' Union. She loved children, dogs, cooking, long walks, shopping trips and helping a friend in need.

Eleanor was very active into her mid-seventies when she retired and began attending Age UK Club, but her health gradually declined after a knee operation, which stopped her riding her precious bike. Eleanor had a happy and full life and we are all grateful to have been part of it. She was a loving mother, grandmother and friend to all until the very end of her wonderful life. We shall miss her dearly.

Dorothy Lilian (Dolly) Andrews (1924 – 2021)



Dolly was born in West End, Ashwell on 19th September 1924, the daughter of Florence May Andrews (née Covington) and Samuel Andrews. She had a sister, Florence, and a brother, Kenneth, who have also sadly passed away, two nieces Elizabeth and Frances, and eight great nieces and nephews, not to mention many great-great nieces and nephews and even some great-great-great nieces and nephews. Dolly never married and stayed single all her life.

Dolly went to school in the village and left at the age of fourteen when she went to work for the Minister and his wife, Rev'd and Mrs Perkins, as a housekeeper. When the Perkins family retired they moved to Hitchin and Dolly moved with them to carry on working for them. When they sadly passed away, Dolly worked at a florist's near the church in Hitchin until the late 1960s.

THOSE WE HAVE LOST

Later, Dolly worked at Day's the Bakers in the Ashwell shop as a shop assistant, where she was well known by everyone in the village. She was an excellent baker herself and, as one of her great nieces suggests, Dolly may well have picked up a few tips while working in the shop. She adds that the family favourites were mince pies, lemon curd tarts and orange marmalade. Dolly would make the mince pies at Christmas time to contribute to the family meal and there were never any left, resulting in some of the family squabbling over who had the last one. Dolly loved working for Day's the Bakers and she worked there until her retirement. Dolly had a long and happy retirement, being an active member of the Village WI. She filled her life in 'being there' for the whole village community and especially the United Reformed Church (formerly the Congregational Chapel). Dolly was a lady of deep faith, always at the Sunday service; and after the service she would always be in the kitchen, serving up teas and coffees.

Dolly has been the longest standing resident of Wolverley House in Ashwell, one of the first to move in when it opened in 1974.

Dolly became housebound a number of years ago, not being able to walk, and was always so grateful to visitors, family and friends, and especially to those family members who would take her out in her wheelchair for a walk around the village – the village she loved so much – always wanting to go to the Cemetery, the United Reformed Church, then along the High Street by Day's and finally down to Crump's and the Museum.

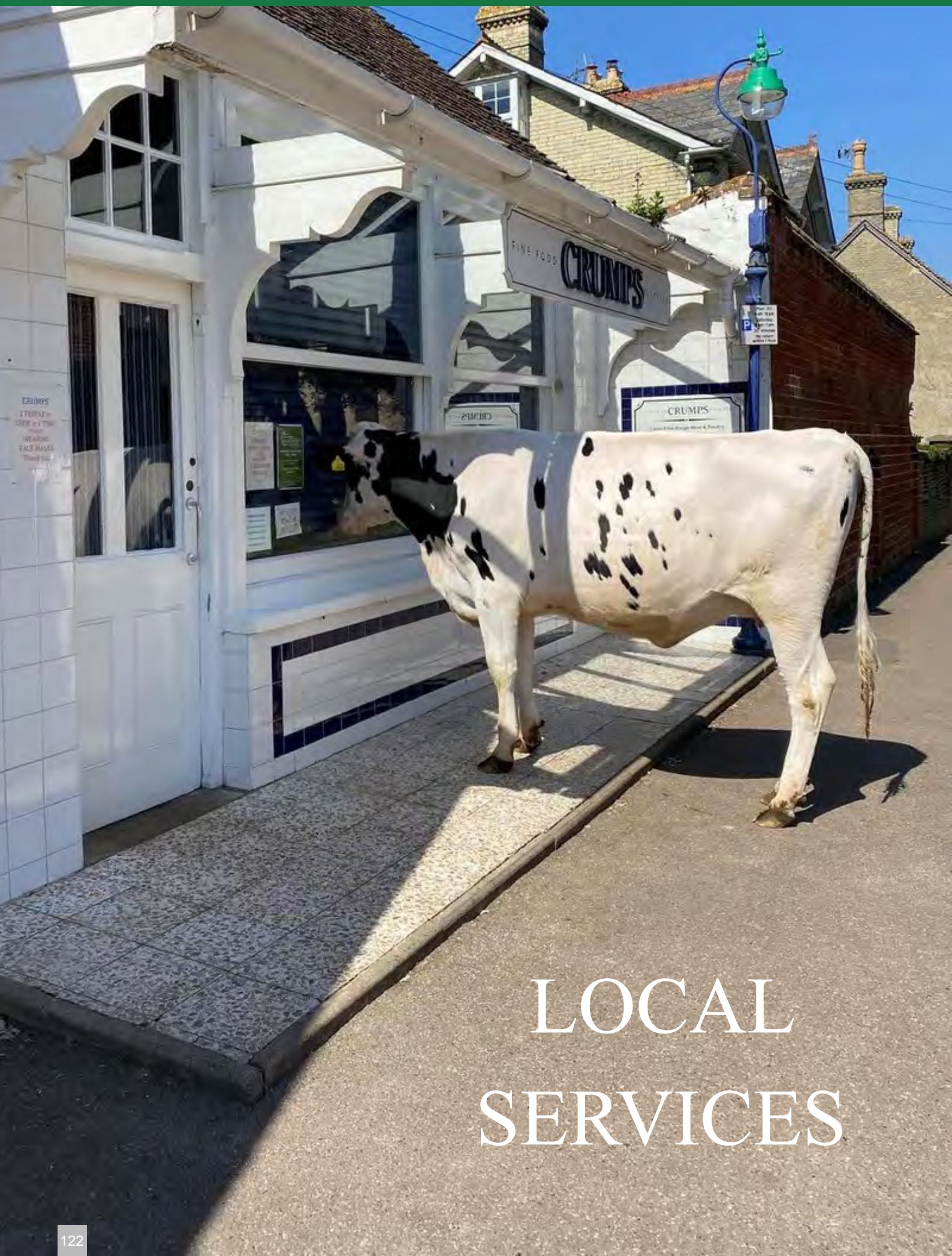
Dolly sadly passed away on Saturday 4th December 2021 after being unwell for three months. She will be missed by the entire community.

Then and Now



View from the General Stores to West End in 1895 and today, clearly showing the impact of motor vehicles.





LOCAL SERVICES

North Hertfordshire District Council

General information and enquiries

www.north-herts.gov.uk or ☎ 474000 (9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday) Textphone: 474800 Deaf or hard of hearing: use the Relay UK app, dial 18001 followed by 01462 474000.

The Customer Service Centre

is located at the NHDC Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth, SG6 3JF. It is open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Payments service

☎ 0300 456 0535 (24-hour service) Out of Hours in an Emergency (homelessness, environmental health, street cleaning, parks, public buildings, car parks) ☎ 0300 777 4125

Planning

The responsibility for planning matters is held by the District Council. The planning officer responsible for Ashwell at North Hertfordshire District Council can be reached on ☎ 474000 or ✉ planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk. If parishioners write to the District Council with comments, either in favour of or against a planning application, Ashwell Parish Council asks them to send copies, please, to the Parish Council Clerk (✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk) so that these comments can be taken into consideration by parish councillors when they meet.

Street Cleaning

This is the responsibility of the District Council. A sweeping lorry visits and public litter bins are emptied every four weeks. Additional visits are made to clear fallen leaves in the autumn, with manual sweepers where needed. If you feel that additional visits are needed, or that any work is not being done properly then please report it online at www.north-herts.gov.uk or by 'phone to ☎ 474000 (office hours) or ☎ 0300 777 4125 (out of hours).

Refuse Collection

At the time of writing the normal refuse collection day for Ashwell is Monday, except in Bank Holiday weeks. Bins should be left at the front of your property by 7:00 am on collection days.

- Food waste (small brown caddy) is collected weekly.
- Recyclable material - glass, tin cans, cardboard, brown paper and plastic other than rigid plastic or plastic bags (large, grey bin) and paper (blue/black box) - is collected fortnightly.
- Household rubbish which cannot be recycled (purple bin) is collected on the alternate fortnights.
- Garden waste (large brown bin) is no longer collected free of charge. To register and pay for this service, £40 per year at the time of writing, go to: gardenrecyclingscheme.co.uk/north-herts/
- Garden waste is collected on the same day as recyclable waste.

To report a missed bin collection: ☎ 474000 or ✉ northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk or go to www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/waste-and-recycling Household Waste Recycling Centres Our nearest recycling centres are at Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, SG6 1HB and Beverley Close (off York Road), Royston, SG8 5HF.

For Hertfordshire County Council services please see separate entry. For Police and other local services please see separate boxes.

Hertfordshire County Council

General Enquiries

☎ 0300 123 4040 or www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

Children's Services

The County Council has oversight of educational provision in Hertfordshire. For enquiries about Schools or Child Protection: ☎ 0300 123 4043 For enquiries about Free School Meals: ☎ 0300 123 404 ✉ FreeSchoolMeals@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Fire and Rescue Service

Contact: ☎ 999 in an emergency. For non-emergencies ☎ 666900 for Baldock & Letchworth Fire Station, Weston Way, Baldock or ☎ 01438 202554, for the District Office at Stevenage. Fire safety enquiries ☎ 0300 123 4046

Highways

Maintenance of roads, pavements and street lighting is the responsibility of Hertfordshire Highways. Faults, including any problems with grass cutting in the summer, should be reported to them online. Go to: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on the 'Potholes and faulty street lights' or ☎ 0300 123 4047

Bus Passes

Enquiries: ✉ csc.concessionarytravel@hertfordshire.gov.uk To apply for or renew a bus pass ☎ 0300 123 4050 or: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services/Bus passes'.

Disabilities

To register as disabled or apply for a blue badge ☎ 0300 123 4042 Textphone/ Minicom 01992 555506 or go to: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services/ Disability'.

Social Care Help

To apply for a social care assessment, go to www.hertfordshire.gov.uk then click on 'Adult Social Services', and then on 'Ask for Social Care Help'.

Emergency out of hours contacts

Children's social care emergency, 24-hour service ☎ 0300 123 4043 Adults' social care emergency, out of hours service ☎ 0300 123 4042 Textphone/Minicom: ☎ 01992 555506

For Police, please see separate box For Police, please see separate box on the following page.



Meals on Wheels...and more

The County's Meals on Wheels service is provided by Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) on behalf of the County Council. HILS operates across Hertfordshire, 365 days of the year. Meals are delivered hot and ready to eat at the subsidised cost of £5.25 for a main meal and dessert, delivered between 11:30 am and 2:00 pm. Each visit includes the cost of delivery and a welfare check.

You can choose from a wide range of meals, including Kosher, Asian, Halal, and West Indian food. HILS also provides texture-modified meals for people who may have difficulty swallowing. In addition to the hot meals, HILS provides Tea and Breakfast packs for £3.65 and £3.05 respectively – this service is only available to people receiving hot meals.

Please be aware that our prices are liable to change. For the latest information on any of our services, you can give us a call on the number below or visit our website.

HILS also provides a wide range of additional support services to help older and vulnerable people stay happy, healthy, and independent at home. These include:

- A Nutrition and Wellbeing service, offering free nutrition and dietetic support for meals clients
- Medication prompts – for meals and pop-in clients
- Active Ageing – one-to-one exercise support in your home or via a video call
- Home from Hospital packs with three days' worth of groceries, delivered to your home or hospital upon discharge
- In-home eye testing, delivered by A1 opticians
- Dementia fun clubs and support
- A keysafe installation service to help you stay safe at home
- Food for lunch clubs and groups delivered hot and ready to eat
- Advocacy to help people make decisions about their care and support

All HILS services are delivered in a safe Covid-Secure way, which includes the use of personal protective equipment, such as face masks and gloves, and contact-free delivery where appropriate. For more information about HILS services, or to sign up for our two-day free trial, please contact:

Hertfordshire Independent Living Service

☎ 0330 2000 103

✉ info@hertsindependentliving.org

🌐 www.hertsindependentliving.org

Police

The Police Officer who covers the Ashwell area is:
PC Mark Ellwood, ✉ mark.ellwood@herts.pnn.police.uk

In an emergency, when there is a danger to life or a crime is actually taking place, ☎ 999.

The Royston Rural Safer Neighbourhood Team is based at Royston Police Station. The officer in charge of this team is:
Sergeant Jon Vine, ✉ jonathan.vine@herts.pnn.police.uk

The local Police Community Support Officers for Ashwell are:
PCSO Chris Brabrook, ✉ chris.brabrook@herts.pnn.police.uk
and PCSO Hannah Moss, ✉ Hannah.moss@herts.pnn.police.uk

To speak to either A/Sergeant Lee Jessup or PCSOs Brabrook or Tomsett, please 'phone ☎ 101 and ask for them in person.

For non-emergencies where police attendance is required, to report a crime or to report any other incidents, ☎ 101. Please do not use social media as a venue for communication in any of these circumstances.

Community Housing

Settle (formerly North Hertfordshire Homes) is responsible for Wolverley House, some cottages in Back Street, and some of the houses and flats in Dixies Close, Ashwell Street and Station Road.

Wolverley House in Gardiners Lane provides sheltered and retirement housing. Facilities include 32 flats, lounge, dining room, guest facilities, laundry and garden. There are regular social activities for residents.

Contact: Settle

658 Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1HA

☎ 0330 343 0016

✉ customer.service@settlegroup.org.uk

🌐 www.settlegroup.org.uk

For Ashwell Housing Association, please see page 17.

For Moss Cottage Homes, please see page 18.

Royston and District Community Transport

We offer door-to-door transport for people living in Royston and the surrounding villages of N. and E. Hertfordshire and S. Cambridgeshire who are unable to use conventional public transport or do not have the use of a car.

We can help with any kind of trip, including medical, social or shopping. Our current charge is 55p per mile and there is a minimum charge of £5.50 for journeys of ten miles or shorter.

Volunteer drivers provide the transport, using their own cars. We also have wheelchair accessible MPVs and mini-buses.

New volunteer drivers are needed urgently.

🌐 www.roytrans.co.uk

☎ 01763 245228

Public Transport from Ashwell

Hertfordshire travel information is available from Intalink at:

www.intalink.org.uk or by telephone: ☎ 0300 123 4050, or by post: Intalink, Passenger Transport Unit, HCC, County Hall CHN101, Hertford, SG13 8TJ

The new HertsLynx demand responsive bus service has been in operation since last autumn. You can book HertsLynx via an App, website or by telephone. Download the HertsLynx App available on Android (Playstore) and Apple (Apple Store) Online: Hertslynx (bookings.hertslynx.co.uk) ☎ 01992 555513

Travel information can also be found on the Traveline website: 🌐 www.traveline.info or by telephone: ☎ 0871 200 22 33. Bus timetables are displayed opposite the village stores on the wall outside Bear House, and at the bus stop opposite the Three Tuns.

Ashwell & Morden Station is just over 2 miles from the centre of the village. Railway timetables, maps, journey planners and tickets can be found at: 🌐 www.thameslinkrailway.com ☎ 0345 026 4700 🌐 www.nationalrail.co.uk

Post Office

At the time of writing the Post Office is open in the Parish Room at the following times: Monday afternoons 13:00 – 16:30, Wednesday afternoons 12:30 – 15:00, Friday mornings 09:30 – 12:00.

It provides most of the Post Office services, including banking.

Category		Landline	Mobile/Email
Accountants	Berry Accounting Services, Litlington, page 19	01763 852622	07850 426325
	LIRIC, Steeple Morden, page 23	01763 853633	
	The Wright Accounts Services, page 26	743159	07872 880107
Agricultural and Commercial Buildings	Johnstruct Ltd, page 23	01277 890595	07967 010575
Alarms and CCTV systems	Opsica Security	03330 124578	
Bakers	Days of Ashwell, High Street	742112	
Basket Maker and Chair Seater	Sandra Barker, Gardiners Lane	743009	
Beauty Treatments	Ashwell Beauty at Rhubarb and Mustard	743462	
	Beauty Barn		07990 311794
Boarding Kennels and Cattery	Country Boarding for Cats and Dogs	742658	
Builders	Mick Huggins, Ashwell Street, page 19	742454	07762 965323
	S D Brown Building Contractors, page 67	659884	07760 241922 ✉sdbrownb@aol.com
Butchers	Crumps, Mill Street, page 61	742255	
Car Repairs, Fuel and Sales	Ashwell Garage, Station Road, page 92	742310	✉ashwellgarage@outlook.com
	Mantles, inside front cover	01763 722780	
Caravan Sites	Ashridge Farm Caravan Club	752527	
	Loves Lane Camping & Caravanning	742382	
Care Services	Care Choices	01223 207770	
	Carewell of Ashwell	743434	07545 273483
Child Care/Activities	Ashwell Preschool, page 34		07565 528194 ✉info@ashwellplaygroup.co.uk
	Baby and Toddler Group, page 33		✉mrsavallely@gmail.com
	Bury Lane Fun Barn, Melbourn, page 101	01763 260418	✉customerservices@ewpepper.co.uk
	Gloria's Day Nursery, West End	7422219	
	Messy Play, see Baby and Toddler Group		
Chimney Sweep	Mills & Sons Chimneys	417006	07736 172988
Churches	C of E, Rev'd Chris Campbell	742277	
	Quakers, Mr Ian Chandler	743091	
	RC, Father Denis Sarsfield	893127	
	URC, Mrs Chris James	742684	✉chrisjames56@btinternet.com
Citizens Advice Bureau	Royston Office	03444 111444	
	24hrs Number	689801	
Cleaning	Cooker Buddy, oven cleaning	810065	
Coffee Shop, Deli and Gifts	Rhubarb & Mustard, High Street	743462	

Category		Landline	Mobile/Email
Community Transport	Royston & District Community Transport, page 122	01763 245228	
Computers	Sigma Office, page 101	742783	✉Info@sigma-office.net
Councillors	County: Steve Jarvis, Hertfordshire County Council, page 14	01438 727122	07815 887375 ✉steve.jarvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk
	District: Tom Tyson, North Hertfordshire District Council, page 15		07546 589377 ✉tom.tyson@north-herts.gov.uk
Dentist	Ashwell Dental Surgery, High Street	742353	
Doctors	Ashwell Surgery, Gardiners Lane	417377	
Dog Training	Completely Canines, Station Road		07969 428293 ✉angella@completelycanines.co.uk
Education	Ashwell Primary School, page 29	742297	✉admin@ashwell.herts.sch.uk
	Knights Templar School, Baldock	620700	
Electrician	Collings Electrical, page 45	08001 804042	
	S D Brown Building Contractors, page 67	659884	07760 241922 ✉sdbrownb@aol.com
	Gill George, page 105		07990 977124 ✉gillgeorge1@outlook.com
Estate Agent	Country Properties, Ashwell Office, back cover	742077	
Farm Shop	Bury Lane, Melbourn, page 101	01763 260418	✉customerservices@ewpepper.co.uk
	Sarah's Farm Shop	01763 852376	
Flower farmer and workshops	Ashwell Flowers		07720 429706 www.ashwellflowers.com
Funeral Directors	E H Crouch Funeral Directors, Letchworth (Dignity), page 19	893191	
	Neville Funeral Service, Hitchin, page 27	444910	
Garden Centre	Arrington Garden Centre and Café, page 91	01223 208194	
	Bickerdikes, Letchworth, page 13	673333	
Garden Design and Maintenance	Jane Buxton Garden Consultant, page 78	742173	07713 083408 ✉jane.buxton@icloud.com
	Meridian Lawn care	742173	
Garden Furniture	Martin Sheds, Hinxworth, page 93		07921 163162
General Stores	Ashwell Stores, High Street	742220	
Hairdressers	Bradley's, Dixies Barns, page 45	742043	
	Susan Birch, High Street	742298	
Hall Hire	Ashwell Parish Room	743922	✉office@stmarysashwell.org.uk
	Ashwell School	742297	✉admin@ashwell.herts.sch.uk
	Ashwell Village Hall	742913	✉mjpearch@btinternet.com

Category		Landline	Mobile/Email
	United Reformed Church	742757	
Health and Well-being	Amber Health, page 39	490141	
	FeetcarePlus	790065	
	Foot Health, Kate E Cumins “anamazing feet”, page 100	631720	07917 679363 ✉ anamazingfeet@yahoo.co.uk
	Hares Clinic	08453 038372	
	Vanessa Jenkinson Reflexology, page 53	742592	✉ vanessajenkinsonreflexologist@gmail.com
Hertfordshire County Council	See pages 14, 121	03001 234040	
Holiday Lets	Character Holiday Cottage, Nicki Holmes, page 96	742690	07957 285286 ✉ info@oldgranarycottage.co.uk
	Daisy Cottage, Northrepps Village		07803 906291
Hospice	Garden House Hospice	679540	
Housing	Ashwell Housing Association, page 17	742793	
	Moss Cottage Homes, page 18	742385	
	Settle (North Hertfordshire Homes)	03303 430016	
	Wolverley House Warden, Community Housing	742123	
Jewellers	Keith Gordon, Ashwell Jewellery	743915	07764 475391
Local and Family Historian	David Short	742385	
Locksmith	mr LockDoc 24/7 Locksmith Services	338202	07772 111222
Meals on Wheels	Meal orders	0330 200 0103	
	General enquiries	0300 123 4044	
Museum	Curator, Peter Greener, page 24	742956	✉ enquiries@ashwellmuseum.org.uk
Nature Reserve	Ashwell Quarry, page 51	742684	✉ chrisjames56@btinternet.com
North Hertfordshire District Council	See pages 15, 121	474000	
	Emergency out of hours	03007 774125	
Opticians	Oliver Radley	01763 273300	
Painter/Decorator	Paul Norman, page 105	730125	07515 157767
Parish Council	Chairman, Graham Lee, page 4		07751 343096
	Clerk, Jane Porter, page 4	743706	✉ clerk@ashwell.gov.uk
Pest Control	Bugs 'n' Things Pest Control Limited, page 92	735999	✉ office@bugsnthings.co.uk
Pharmacy	Ashwell Pharmacy	742250	
Picture Framing	Ashwell Gallery	743366	
Pilates	Ashwell Pilates	743244	
Plumbing and Heating	SJS Plumbing and Heating Ltd, page 13		07966 078371 ✉ Jamie@sjsplumbingandheating.co.uk

Category		Landline	Mobile/Email
Police	See page 122, also Royston	01763 249249	
Political Parties	Conservative, Christine Scholfield	742136	
	North East Herts. Labour	03450 922299	
	Liberal Democrat, Tom Tyson		07546 589377
Post Office	See page 122		
Printers	Parkes display print expo	01767 603930	
Property Maintenance	ECMS - Edward's Cleaning and Maintenance Service, page 91	742566	07713 095709 ✉edsmaintenance@icloud.com
Public Houses/Hotels	The Bushel & Strike	743984	
	The Rose and Crown	239365	
	The Three Tuns	743131	
Samaritans	North Hertfordshire, page 6	116123	✉jo@samaritans.org
Transport Services	R&A Transport Services, page 23	743106	07951 851501
Tree Surgeons	The Blue Tree Co	450203	
Tutoring Services	Kip McGrath Education Centres, page 61	672227	
Water Softeners	Ashwell Water Softeners	742472	08006 343470

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